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TAYLOR — THE KING'S RIVAL

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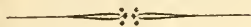


FRENCH'S
AMERICAN DRAMA.

The Acting Edition.

No. CXXIV.

*C. W. Hathaway
Oct 1901*



THE KING'S RIVAL;
OR,
THE COURT AND THE STAGE.

A DRAMA, IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

TOM TAYLOR AND CHARLES READE,

AUTHORS OF "MASKS AND FACES," "TWO LOVES AND A LIFE,"
ETC. ETC.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

A Description of the Costume—Cast of the Characters—Entrances and Exits—
Relative Positions of the Performers on the Stage, and the whole of the
Stage Business.

AS PERFORMED AT THE NEW YORK THEATRES.

NEW-YORK:
SAMUEL FRENCH,
121 NASSAU-STREET.

Cast of the Characters.—THE KING'S RIVAL.

	<i>T. R., London.</i>	<i>Boston Theatre.</i>	<i>Broadway, N. Y.</i>	<i>California.</i>
King Charles the Second,	-	Mr. G. Vandenhoff.	Mr. Grace.	Mr. Marden.
The Duke of Richmond,	-	" T. Mead.	" Bennett.	" J. A. Smith
The Lord Privy Seal, <i>Lord Shaftesbury</i> ,	-	" F. Ede.	" F. E. Morris.	" Harold.
Lord Buckhurst,	-	" Sidney.	" J. B. Howe.	" Rand.
Sir George Etheredge,	-	" Douglas.	" Cowell.	" Kingsland.
Sir Thomas Ogle	-	" G. Burt.	" N. T. Davenport.	" H. Hook.
Samuel Pepys, <i>clerk of the Acts</i> ,	-	" J. L. Toole.	" Gilbert.	" W. B. Chapman.
John Pepys, <i>his brother, a young clergyman</i> ,	-	" Fergus Tree.	" S. D. Johnson.	" Harvey.
Major Wildman, <i>a Fifth Monarchy man</i> ,	-	" Stuart.	" Daly.	" Walter Leman.
Will Chiflinch,	-	" Morland.	" Lyster.	" Rouse.
Page to the King,	-	—	" Harcourt.	—
Page to the Queen,	-	—	—	Miss Fowler
<i>Servants, Lords, Courtiers, Attendants, &c.</i>				
Catherine of Braganza, <i>Queen of Charles II.</i> ,	Miss Grey.	Miss E. Taylor.	Mrs. Warren.	Mrs. Everard.
Miss Stewart,	" Glyn.	Mrs. Hudson Kirby.	Miss A. Gougenheim	Miss A. Gougenheim.
Nell Gwynne.	Mrs. Seymour.	" J. Wood.	" J. Gougenheim.	" J. Gougenheim.
Mrs. Price,	Miss Douglas.	Miss Harris.	" Duckworth.	—
Mrs. Wells,	" Robertson.	" C. Biddles.	" Richardson.	—
Mrs. Middleton,	" St. Clair.	" Walters.	" Roberts.	—
Lady Denham,	" Wheeler.	" Rose.	Mrs. Axtel.	—
		<i>Maids of Honor, Attendants &c., &c.</i>		

PLACE : LONDON.—PERIOD : 1667.

Those passages marked with inverted commas are omitted in representation.

Costume.—THE KING'S RIVAL.

(Court Costumes of Reign of Charles II.)

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

EXITS AND ENTRANCES.

L. means *First Entrance, Left*. R. *First Entrance, Right*. S. E. L. *Second Entrance, Left*. S. E. R. *Second Entrance, Right*. U. E. L. *Upper Entrance, Left*. U. E. R. *Upper Entrance, Right*. C. *Centre*. L. C. *Left of Centre*. R. C. *Right of Centre*. T. E. L. *Third Entrance, Left*. T. E. R. *Third Entrance, Right*. C. D. *Centre Door*. D. R. *Door Right*. D. L. *Door Left*. U. D. L. *Upper Door, Left*. U. D. R. *Upper Door, Right*.

* * * The Reader is supposed to be on the Stage, facing the Audience.

THE KING'S RIVAL.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*The Matted Gallery of Whitehall.*—Large practicable glass doors c. leading to the Park.—Large double doors leading off U. E. R. to the King's apartments.—Large double doors leading off U. E. L. leading to the Queen's apartments.—Large windows R. and L. 2 E. with curtains.—BUCKHURST, ETHEREGE, and OGLE, form group near table, L. H.—LORD SHAFTESBURY at table R.—Courtiers about stage.

Ether. (c.) Nay, 'tis certain the Duchess and his Majesty are off. Will Chiffinch tells me 'twas a rare scene. First, the lady scolded and the King swore, then the King scolded and the lady swore, but his Majesty was firm for once.

Buck. (L.) The Duchess out of favor!—rot it, I had a suit to his Majesty that the Duchess had stood my friend in—for a ship.

Shaft. (R.) The Duchess out! Humph! And who is the royal favorite now?

Ogle. (L. c.) Fair Jennings, for a thousand.

Ether. (c.) No; 'tis not fair Jennings.

Ogle. 'Tis some play-house wench then! Gad's my life, it is little Nelly.

Buck. Mrs. Gwynne of the King's House?

Ogle. Even so. Will Chiffinch says the King hath cast his royal sheep's eyes on the fresh little rogue.

Buck. 'Tis a lie!

Ogle. [*fiercely.*] How!

Buck. Of that knave Chiffinch.

Ogle. Oh!

Ether. Pshaw! Where are your eyes? The lady who has ousted the Duchess, Fair Jennings, Moll Davies, and all the rest, is——

Omnes. Who?

Ether. Mrs. Stewart;—he's deeper in love with her than he hath been with woman yet since Lucy Walters.

Ogle. 'Tis true he hath taken her much apart of late.

Ether. And his eyes follow her like a pair of bailiffs.

Shaft. (I must be better acquainted with this lady.)

Ether. Why 'twas for jealousy of her the Duchess broke out last night!

Buck. (I'm glad 'tis not Nelly.) This will be sour news for Richmond.

Ogle. 'Tis true the Duke of Richmond has long followed Mistress Stewart.

Buck. Oh, a sea Strephon! Has her portrait in his cabin aboard the "Rupert," and worships it as the Muscovites do their St. Nicholas.

Ogle. Here comes that prince of newsmongers, Sam Pepys, he'll know all.

Enter PEPYS, followed by his brother JOHN, L. 1 E.

Pepys. A good day to your lordship; a good day, my Lord Buckhurst; gentlemen all, your servant. My brother, my lord, John Pepys, from the university. [*aside to JOHN*] Bear thyself easily, John. A modest youth, whom I crave leave to commend to your lordship. I had a word to say to your lordship touching the fleet, and the payment of the sailors.

Shaft. By-and-by, sir; I have other business now. Sir George, a word. [*ETHER. turns to SHAFT.*]

Pepys (L. c.) Ah! 'tis so with them all; talk of money and they're deaf! But you're from the fleet, my lord. [*to BUCK.*] You saw the fight.

Buck. (c.) And so would hear no more of it. I'd as lief hear of the plague.

Pepys. As your lordship says—the plague—[the bills are up again this week—110 dead in All-hallows Ward—and the pretty fat widow in the New Exchange gone, that I bought a pair of laced gloves of only last week; 'tis most grievous—I had to burn the gloves.]

Buck. Rot the plague! I would hear of the play-house. man.

Pepys. Ah! 'tis dull—dull—would they but give us more of Etherege, and less of that tame rogue, Shakespeare. They talk of his "Midsummer Night's Dream,"—poor, insipid stuff, methinks. No, give me Nelly in Florimel; she do play the most excellent mad fool I ever saw in my life. I saw her last night—The King was there.

Buck. Ah!

Pepys. And, Lord! to see how he do gaze and sigh after her.

Buck. Eh! After Nelly—it cannot be.

Pepys. Doubtless as your lordship says, 'tis impossible; methinks he is mad now for Miss Stewart—getting her into corners, and—[*observes JOHN*]
—further off, John, we are on state matters. But the Dutch, my lord—the late action—you were in it—was it a victory?

Buck. I know not whether 'twas a victory or not; I saw nothing but smoke, and smelt nothing but stinkpots; ask Richmond, he brings letters and a Dutch flag.

Pepys. A Dutch flag! Ah! his grace of Richmond. There is a man! eh, my lord?

Buck. Pshaw, a water drinker!

Pepys. As your lordship says, a sober knave.

Buck. But about Nelly?

Pepys. Oh, the maddest rogue! I saw her in their tiring-room last night. [*to JOHN.*] What! you must be thrusting yourself into affairs of policy?

John. Nay, brother! [*retires up*]

Pepys. And what's better still, I kissed her too!

Buck. And she cuffed thee, I'll be sworn.

Pepys. As your lordship says—in some sort she did; 'tis a playful thing.

Buck. [*gravely.*] Well, Mr. Pepys, take my advice—kiss her no more.

Pepys. Why not, my lord?

Buck. Because if my sword come about your ears, 'twill sting them worse than her hand.

Pepys. Ugh! Your lordship is merry.

Buck. No! I am in earnest! What says Mrs. Pepys to such wild doings?

Pepys. My wife, poor wretch. Ha, ha, ha! [*gravely.*] But your lordship will not mention it to her!

Buck. Make yourself easy on that head. [*touches sword hilt.*] This is all the risk you run. [*PEPYS retires up.*] Ha! My nostrils are offended with the odor of sanctity and salt water. See, boys, see; here comes Richmond, with that black puritan, Major Wildman.

Ogle. Let's bait them both.

Enter RICHMOND, L. II. 1 E.

Rich. (This is Whitehall. I shall see her once again. I shall lay my flag at the feet of the gracious sovereign I love and serve; and a look and a word from the queen of my heart will repay me for past danger and separation.)

Enter MAJOR WILDMAN, L. I E.

Wild. (Now to see who, amidst all these fools and triflers, I can win to our great cause,—the cause of heaven and the people.)

Rich. (L. c.) My heart bounds with prophetic joy, and loyalty and love.

Ether. (R. c.) Welcome from sea, my lord, laurels and all.

Ogle. (c.) And never a willow among 'em yet.

Rich. Good day, Sir George Etherege. Sir Thomas Ogle, you are merry.

Wild. (L.) And have they not cause? The Dutch beating us at sea; the plague scourging us on shore; the King's exchequer bankrupt. What should they do but be merry?

Buck. (c) At least there's some merit in merriment under the awful shadow of Major Wildman.

Wild. Each to his calling, my lord. You thrust with the tongue, I wear my wit here [*touches sword.*] much at your service.

Ogle. (The Drawcansir.)

Rich. His Majesty is late. I long to behold his gracious countenance. There is but one face here I more desire to see again.

Buck. You, may, perhaps, have a double pleasure ; you may see them together.

Rich. (What means he ?) I have a Dutch flag to lay at his Majesty's feet.

Ether. Nay, the flag should be laid at the feet of Britannia, who now figures on earth and British halfpence, under the form of La Belle Stewart.

Buck. The King hath been a hoarder of halfpence ever since the new coinage. 'Tis a politic device of my Lord Treasurer to teach his Majesty saving.

Rich. I do not understand. Is this jesting ?

Buck. Sober truth. Who has a penny-piece ? [*courtiers search their pockets. JOHN PEPYS produces a penny.*] See, observe his Majesty's head, which heaven preserve. Reverse, Miss Stewart's portrait, with Britannia's helmet and trident.

Ether. The only fault the King finds in the die is, that their two heads are not on the same side of the coin.

Rich. (This is but to chafe me. Her name shall not be fouled in a quarrel with these court moths.) [*retires up.*]

Ether. Habet ! how he winced !

Ogle. Every hit went home.

Wild. (Jealous ! and of the King ! Ah ! here's stuff to work on.)

Buck. (I feel for him : 'tis ill jesting with jealousy. These tales about Nelly and the King ! Let him take the Maids of Honor, and welcome ; but when it comes to the players,—peste ! 'tis scandalous.) [*they group L., a little back.*]

Pepys. [*To JOHN.*] 'Tis a duke, John. Now mark how I accost him. My Lord Duke, I make bold to put myself on your Grace' memory.

Rich. (L. c.) Ah ! Master Samuel Pepys, I think.

Pepys. (c) I saw your Grace at our office before the fleet sailed, about the pay of the men on board your Grace's ship, the "Rupert." Sad grumbling knaves, your Grace,—they make me mad, sometimes. They have the foulest tricks : one of them lay a-dying right before the office windows, no later than yesterday, of the scurvy.

Rich. While the money that should go for their food and medicine is lavished on these butterflies. I never come to Whitehall. Master Pepys, but I long to shake the gold off these gentlemen's coats into my poor fellows' pockets.

Pepys. But this action, my lord ; how did it go ? Doubtless it was a victory ; but I cannot hear of any prizes taken.

Rich. A victory ! Oh, yes. [*ironically.*] We have but lost fourteen ships.

Pepys. Mercy on me !

Rich. And seven run aground on the Galloper Sand ; and the enemy has not chased us further up the river than Chatham, this time. So past doubt it is a victory.

Pepys. Alack a-day ! Here'll be more ships to find, and no money ! Still it is a comfort we have a Dutch flag.

Rich. Let us make much of it—for the Dutch have some ten of ours,

to set against that one bit of bunting. But what can you expect from a fleet, where the best title to promotion is the good word of a royal mistress, and the worst discredit, to have followed the sea from boyhood!

Pepys. 'Tis true, these gentlemen captains are a sore curse—but I beg your grace's pardon.

Rich. Reckon not me among them, sir, I often blush for the title I bear. Who would not rather be a plain sailor like Drake or Mings, than such a nobleman as Barkely! Mr. Pepys! his ship, the "Swiftsure," was never seen from the beginning of the fight, till the last shot was fired! 'Tis thanks to such gentlemen as he, that Van Tromp dares sail up the Thames, with a broom at his mast-head, while English flags crowd sail before him, like flying-fish before an albacore. Oh, sir, I have seen things from the deck of my ship the "Rupert," that have pricked me to break my sword for very shame.

Pepys. [*shrugs his shoulders.*] Hush!

Wild. (L.) (This is my man.) That speech sounds strangely here, yet I have seen the time when, even inside these walls, the honor of England had more such defenders.

Rich. When shall we see that time again?

Wild. [*lowering his voice*] When you see a man again at the head of this kingdom, instead of a courtier's puppet, and a mistress's plaything.

Rich. Sir! These are dangerous words! Oh, for the days gone by, when gallant deeds of gentlemen won gentle looks of ladies!

Pepys. Our ladies think more of a man's leg in a coranto, than of his hand in a battle.

Rich. Not all, Mr. Pepys. Thank heaven, there is still one at least, worthy to nerve a man's arm in the hour of danger! One that an English gentleman need not blush to live and die for!

Pepys. Well, I trust there may be: but I should be hard put to it to name the lady, though there's no answering for them now, since my Lady Bagot turned cruel, and Miss Stewart kind.

Rich. (Miss Stewart again!) Come, Mr. Pepys, I have been twelve months away from court—you spoke of—of Lady Bagot.

Pepys. It is said she holds the Duke of York at a distance, but the marvel is not so great that a woman should take to virtue for a change—what I most admire at, is the other transformation.

Rich. What other?

Pepys. Nay, I hate talebearing—but 'tis said that Miss Stewart—Ha! His Majesty!

Rich. (Curse their light tongues that make so free with her name. I must see her—speak with her—aye, even before I pay my duty to the King—I feel a sickness at my heart.) [*retires.*]

Enter KING CHARLES, CHIFFINCH and PAGE.

(*All the Nobles and Courtiers salute him.*)

King. Good day, gentlemen! Ha, my Lord Shaftesbury—(Hang his grave face)—So, Buckhurst, welcome from sea.

Pepys. (L. c.) I bring for your Majesty's approval, the list of the reserve fleet. [*giving paper*]

King. [*languidly—sits in chair on the L. of table.*] Let it lie there, Master Pepys,—I will peruse it—when I have time.

Shaft. (R.) The business of this day's council, your Majesty—

King. Odds fish, man, shall I not learn the business of the council, at the council!

Shaft. (R. of table.) [*drily*] Let us hope so, your Majesty. These papers await your Majesty's signature. [*King takes pen.*] Shall I not first make you acquainted with their purport?

King. What, is it not enough that I sign them for you? Ah, traitor, would you annihilate your King? [*to page*] Bid Master Story attend us to the pond. [*exit, PAGE, c.*] I have not fed the ducks to-day—while I waste my time here my pintados will be starving.

Pepys. (And the sailors!)

King. And, Chiffinch—here is no paper—fetch me pens and paper. [*exit CHIF. L. 1 E.*] Now, Etherege, what would'st thou! A favor by thy face.

Ether. (c.) But that your Majesty should take order—

King. Tillyvally—take order! Next to physic 'tis the thing I hate most. So, where's the paper? [*impatiently.*]

Ether. [*to Buck.*] (Take note now.) Nay, then Davenant will have his way.

King. [*interested*] Eh? Davenant!

Ether. And the Duke's house secures pretty Nelly.

King. [*with vivacity.*] Nelly! But she's hired at the other house with Killigrew.

Ether. Yes, your Majesty, but Sir William bids her fourscore pounds over Killigrew, and though Nelly be loyal, yet money being everywhere scarce—

King. Odds fish! Rob the King's Playhouse—and of its prettiest wench! Tempt Nelly from her allegiance—this must be looked to.

Buck. (So! now I know what to do.)

Re-enter PAGE, c.

Page. Mr. Story attends your Majesty at the pond; he has a rare brood of painted ducks.

King. Hang the ducks, man! we have grave matters in hand. Bid Davenant and Killigrew attend us in our closet. [*Exit PAGE*]

Re-enter CHIFFINCH, L.

So Chiffinch at last. Now this paper.

Chif. [*awkwardly and trying to keep in a laugh.*] Your Majesty—

King. Well, man, well; where is it? What art thou grinning at?

Chif. Your Majesty's Stationer has refused all further supply. He is a poor man, and says your Majesty's custom hath ruined him; he hath lost £400 by your Majesty.

King. The Knave! [*angrily—then good-humouredly.*] Odds fish! is our privy purse so empty? See paper henceforth furnished at thy own credit, Chiffinch.

Chif. [*scorrowfully.*] But my credit's as bad as your Majesty's.

King. Nay, then, we must write in the Queen's closet.

John. [to *PEPYS*,—*aside*.] Brother, brother, a blank leaf from my sermon.

Pepys. Give it me, John, quick. If your Majesty would deign to use a fair page from my journal book.

King. Thanks, Master Pepys—we will remember this good service.
[*writes*.]

John. Brother, brother, the service was mine.

Pepys. Hold thy peace, John! Thou art too forward. Do I not know what is good for thee, John?

King. [*folding note*.] Harkye, Chiffineh—this to Mrs. Stewart's own hand.

Re-enter PAGE.

Page. Sir William Davenant and Sir Thomas Killigrew await your Majesty's pleasure.

King. 'Tis well. Carry off our Nell Gwynne! No, we cannot part with Nelly.
[*Exit c. d. followed by PAGE.*]

Buck. [*breaking out*.] But you shall part with her, if I carry her off by force. George—Tom—will you stand by me!

Ether. When did we fail thee yet!

Buck. Then I count upon you. I'll have a brace of fellows ready with a coach near her lodging in Drury Lane—you keep the street. Harkye!
[*they retire up, R. C.*]

WILDMAN comes down with RICHMOND.

Rich. And this is the court! Bankrupt alike in credit and decency!—all corrupt!—all impure!—no, not all!—you doubt!

Wild. I doubt not—I know. Can this infamy last? Ought it to last!

Rich. Master Pepys, you were speaking of Mrs. Stewart.

Pepys. Was I so! Ah, my tongue will wag.

Rich. What had you to say of that lady?

Pepys. On second thoughts—nothing!

Rich. (Are they all in league to torture me?)

Enter a PAGE, throwing open door of QUEEN'S apartments, L. U. E.

Page. Her Majesty!

Enter QUEEN, followed by MISSES MIDDLETON, PRICE, WELLS, LADY DENHAM, old LADY SANDERSON, &c., they pass towards the KING'S apartment.

Chif. I crave your Majesty's pardon, but the King is busy in his closet with matters of state.

Queen. Say we await his leisure in the Withdrawing Room.

Enter MISS STEWART, R. 1 E. who curtsies to QUEEN.

Exit QUEEN, after dismissing attendants, L. U. E.—The PAGE closes the doors.

Rich. (L.) My own love! how the sight of her noble face strikes scandal dumb.
[*bows to MISS STEWART.*]

Stew. (r. c.) Richmond!

Rich. Frances!

Chif. (r.) [*coming to her on other side.*] By your leave my lord—one word, madam. [*giving note—aside.*] From the King!

Stew. [*coldly*] 'Tis well, sir. (Must I still endure this persecution?) [*to RICHMOND.*] O Richmond, you are come at last, and safe, and glorious.

Rich. [*coldly*] Pardon me—the King's letter!

Stew. But I would rather speak to you than read the King. 'Tis nothing—doubtless it concerns the Queen.

Rich. The more your duty to read it. Nay, I will wait—I have learned to wait.

Stew. [*opening note and reading it.*] "I must see you here, and alone. —CHARLES." [*angrily.*] Must see you—alone! Oh, this passes bearing! [*to CHIFFINCH.*] Tell the King—[*pauses.*]—yet, no. I will see him, and bring this new folly to an end! [*to CHIFFINCH.*] Say, I obey his Majesty. [*CHIFFINCH bows and exits, c. d.*] And now, I am free—free to hear of your deservings.

Pepys. [*coming down with JOHN. r.*] The sun having risen, I am fain to bask in its rays. My brother John, Madam, for whom I would crave your countenance.

Stew. (c.) [*tedious*] Sir, your servant.

Pepys. And for myself—

Shaft. (r. c.) [*interrupting him*] By your leave, Master Secretary. [*PEPYS goes up followed by JOHN.*] Fair Mistress Stewart, you are often alone with the King, here is a paper I would fain lay before his Majesty.

Stew. Methinks, my lord, as President of the Council, your own hand were the more fitting channel.

Shaft. Alas! business never reaches the royal ear save in the disguise of pleasure.

Stew. More shame for councillors who stoop so to disguise it.

[*SHAFT: retires.*]

Rich. (How they all cringe to her.)

Buck. [*coming down, r.*] May I recall myself to Mistress Stewart's sweet memory!

Stew. My Lord Buckhurst is not easily forgotten.

Buck. Madam, I have a suit to the King, 'tis for a ship; I have served two campaigns as a volunteer—as I've no talent for obeying orders, I think I must be created to give them.

Stew. Nay, my lord; why appeal to me! Surely the Lord High Admiral—

Buck. What is the Duke of York's pennant to Mistress Stewart's petticoat!

Stew. [*haughtily.*] My lord, Frances Stewart has no such power as you suppose; but if she had, she would put it to better use than to recommend for command one who owns himself wanting in its first requirement—obedience! [*turns away*]

Buck. [*to OGLE.*] I'm sped, Tom; I wish you better luck. [*goes up.*]

Ogle. [*coming down, r.*] Mistress Stewart—a word for Charity's sweet sake.

Stew. Nay, that is a spell I must obey.

Ogle. I beseech your good offices for a poor and most deserving man.

Stew. What do you want for him?

Ogle. Only a miserable thousand of the public money—the embassy to the Venetian.

Stew. And who is the poor but deserving man you would have it for?

Ogle. One Sir Thomas Ogle.

Stew. Yourself?

Ogle. As deserving a fellow as I know, and as out at elbows.

Stew. Nay, you need no advocate for your deserts—they speak for themselves—and for your poverty you had best vouch——

Ogle. Who?

Stew. Your creditors! [*turns away.*]

Ogle. Ugh!

Wild. (L.) [*to Rich*] You see how these court flies buzz about her?

Rich. (L. c.) Well, sir; and what then?

Wild. They have the instinct of corruption! (It works! it works! This duke shall be ours) [*Exit, L. 1 E.*]

Re-enter CHIFFINCH, C. D.

Chif. His Majesty invites the court to the Tennisyard My Lord Rochester has challenged Sir Charles Sedley to the best of six sets, and the wager will be played anon. [*Exit. c.*]

[*Courtiers take hands of ladies and file off, c.* *ETHEREGE and SHAFTESBURY offer their hands successively to MISS STEWART, who curtsies and declines.*]

Ether. (Curse her proud spirit.) Fair Mistress Middleton—!

[*Exit with her, c. D.*]

Shaft. My Lady Denham, may I crave the honor. [*Exit with her, c. D.*]

Pepys. Plague on't, all the pretty ones are taken up. Lord that I should be fobbed off with the mother of the maids. [*goes up ceremoniously to LADY SANDERSON, who is old and plain.*] Well, my wife, poor wretch, would like it best so My Lady Sanderson, may I make bold? Follow us, John, and mark how I bear myself

[*Exit with old lady, followed by JOHN, imitating PEPYS' strut, c.*]

Stew. Alone with him at last. [*surprised.*] He does not speak to me—Richmond!

Rich. Madam.

Stew. Madam!

Rich. [*sorrowfully*] Nay, I am quick to catch the tone of the court. There was a time I had used less ceremony, but that was when Frances Stewart boasted a scantier train of followers.

Stew. Richmond! Your esteem is precious to me—you know it is; but remember the blood in my veins is royal. No—no; I will not—I cannot be proud with you. Is it thus you and I should meet?

Rich. Heaven knows it is not the meeting I have looked for all this weary time; through storm—through battle—in the face of danger—under the shadow of death.

Stew. Ah, me! Their evil tongues have worked on you, too: is your trust not proof against the scandal of this place!

Rich. Tongues! Scandal! That were little; but my own eyes—my own ears—this sudden respect of the court—this secret commerce of letters with the King! How am I to reconcile these with the fair fame of Frances Stewart!

Stew. Frances Stewart is a woman; what has she to oppose to the random wits of profligate foplings! Heaven help me! I wear no sword! I once thought I might have trusted the defence of my good name to yours,

Rich. Oh, if my heart's blood could spare you a reproach, so I knew it undeserved.

Stew. My way of life in this loose court has been open to you. If man knows what I have been, and am—you should know it. I will not stoop to clear myself in your thoughts by protestations, still less by tears. I will but look you in the face thus, and say—I am worthy of a good man's love! Do you believe me! [*pause.*] I will be trusted or I will be nothing to you—do you trust me!

Rich. That voice—those eyes—bear down all doubt!

Stew. And now, speak to me of yourself.

Rich. Nay, I would hear of you.

Stew. A life spent on the sea in danger and honor, is better worth relating than idle days wasted in an idle court. Tell me of yourself—and make me, if you can, love and honor you more than I do.

[*RICHMOND kisses her hand.*]

Voice of Page. [*without.*] Way for his Majesty!

Stew. [*Goes to the c. d., and looks out.*] The King—he comes this way—go—

Rich. Why should I go!

Stew. Because he must not find you here—for your own sake—for my sake, he must not!

Rich. [*goes to c. d.*] So! unattended! (The letter—was this a rendezvous! [*coldly.*] I will wait—the King owes me a hearing)

Stew. [*coldly.*] You had better have trusted her who loves you!

Enter the KING hastily, c.—not seeing RICHMOND, who is hidden by curtains of windows, L. 2 E.]

King. (L. c.) Now, my fair Britannia!

[*RICHMOND comes from window, and kneels to the KING; he starts back*

King. [*angrily.*] Ha! my Lord of Richmond as I think—[*looks at STEWART, then at RICHMOND.*] What do you here?

Rich. (L.) I am just from the fleet, your Majesty, with letters and a flag from Sir Edward Spragge.

King. S'death, my Lord, you are a better captain than courtier, or you should know that audiences are asked—not taken as highwaymen take purses. We would be alone—we will send for you when our leisure serves.

Rich. Your Majesty teaches me a subject's duty.

[*Exit, L. 1 E., with a look of anguish at Miss STEWART.*]

Stew. [*aside*] This must have an end.

King. Hang him—salt-water swab! You read my letter? I said alone!

Stew. Your pardon, Sire, I take my orders from the Queen!

King. Nay, forgive me, sweet Mistress Stewart—but in your company Charles Stewart would forget the King.

Stew. Charles Stewart forgets the King, when he so treats a noble gentleman, and a faithful servant.

King. S'death, are we poor monarchs never to be private? What the plague had the man to be thrusting his frowsy flag in my face; now, when the Majesty of Britain would be alone with the beauty of Britannia!—What, still frowning!—Nay then, set me a penance—I'll perform it—*foi de roi*!

Stew. Repair the slight you have put on the Duke of Richmond, grant him an audience forthwith—here, and before the court, with such honor as his name and gallant deeds deserve.

King. Anything at my Britannia's bidding. Here, who waits?

Re-enter CHIFFINCH, c.

Say to his Grace of Richmond, we grant him an audience here—in an hour.

Stew. Sooner!

King. Plague on't—in half-an-hour. [*Exit, CHIFFINCH, L. 1 E.* There! and now let the magnanimity of King Charles the Second plead for the gracelessness of that sad rogue, Charles Stewart—your most loving cousin.

Stew. Ever my most gracious sovereign.

King. Odd's fish!—Why will you be still thrusting that cursed crown in my face! Here is no King, I tell you, but a man, a loving, and something hot blooded man. [*approaches her passionately.*]

Stew. And here—a woman—an unprotected and orphaned woman, if your kingly crown restrain you not, let my crown of maidenhood make me sacred.

King. [*draws back a moment.*] Pshaw!—All royalty is restraint—besides, you and I are but mesne King and Queen: we are vassals both of one Lord paramount—King Cupid! The only king that bears no fetters—he owns no law but choice—no restraint but satiety—no sanction but his own.

“*Stew.* Your Majesty's love-canons and mine are strangely different.

“*King.* Let me teach you mine.

“*Stew.* Nay, Sire, why look for more pupils? Surely, you have enough already. And you would find me as unapt as you have found them quick-witted.

“*King.* Ah! you do yourself wrong. Compare not yourself with the Mancinis and the Castlemaines, beings whose very names infect the air you breathe. No, no; it is not the King, sated with easy victories and venal conquests that now pleads before you, but the man consumed by that passion which purifies like fire. I have only desired till now; now, for the first time, I love!

“*Stew.* If I could believe this, Sire!

“*King.* You would love me!

Stew. This were the last time we should ever meet alone.

King. Oh, no!—you would not say so, if you knew me better; if “you could but look here, (*putting his hand on his heart*), and see how “empty, how desolate, is this heart of mine! In its better moments, “it yearns for something to believe in, and look up to. Oh, do not turn “away! you would not shake off a drowing wretch that tried to grasp “your hand, and will you fling me back into that sea of howling appetite that is sucking me down! all for want of a strong pure love, like “yours, to grapple to!” [*Flings himself before her.*] Oh, Frances Stewart! have you no pity on the most unhappy man in England!

Stew. For heaven's sake, rise. Sir! I do pity you; would I could comfort you. Should any one see you in this posture! [*King rises.*] Remember whom I serve: your wife, your wronged, unhappy, but still loving wife; whose heart is crying for love as loudly as your own; on whom alone you can bestow affection, and yet bring no infamy.

King. Mistress Stewart, you forget yourself! I came here to woo, not to hear a sermon: Barrow gives me enough of preaching. I know your sex! I can read this coldness: it is not that you cannot love, but that you love some other.

Stew. [*Confused*] Your Majesty!

King. Let him not cross my path. The King brooks no rival here.

Stew. Nay: even were it so, you could hardly deny me the right of loving one, you, who love so many! But, indeed, your Majesty wrongs yourself: King Charles's worst enemies have never denied him generosity.

King. You think so. Ha, yes! I *have* been generous! the tool of every knave that set himself to cozen me; “the plaything of every “pretty jade who chose to fool Charles Stewart.” I have been *easy*; but why?—because I was indifferent, or despised them. But for the man who comes between me and you, let him look to himself.

Stew. The man whom Frances Stewart loves will brave even Charles Stewart's anger.

King. 'Tis well! Whoever he be, let him take heed to his footing. Yes; they all cozen, and rival, and thwart, and plot against their King; and their King, poor fool, laughs and forgives them! But for *this* one, let his foot trip, and his head shall answer for it. Aye, his head, madam, though half the nation mourned about his scaffold!

[*Exit furiously into his apartment, R. U. E.*]

Stew. [*Sinking with terror into a chair.*] And I must play the braggart! I dreamed not of this peril. Should he discover 'tis Richmond I love, and should my love destroy him!—horrible! I must hide it, hide it as jealously as I ever thought to avow it proudly. Yes, cruel King! Ungenerous rival! His foot shall *not* slip! Our love shall triumph yet! He is here!

Re-enter CHIFFINCH, showing in RICHMOND, L. I. E.

Chif. 'Twas here, my lord, that his Majesty appointed you an audience; I will announce your presence. [*Exit, R. U. E.*]

Rich. [*Aside—seeing MISS STEWART.*] She is here still! Yet flushed from the King's caresses! Oh, give me patience!

Stew. At my request, his Majesty has promised to repair with honor the seeming slight he put on you.

Rich. At your request! And I must stoop to take honor of the hand that, but now, may have pressed yours in passion! But that he is my King—

[Lays his hand on his sword.

Stew. Richmond! for love of heaven! be more temperate; be master of yourself. You shall know all! I have no secrets from you. The King hath even now urged his suit to me.

Rich. The confession is out of date. I am fresh from a regale of court gossip. I know all now, and would spare your lips, [retires up,] and my ears.

Stew. (Better so awhile! Let him think of me as he will; hate me if he will: by that means, he will be safe till I dare reveal the truth; it were words wasted, to attempt it now.) Richmond, will you grant me one request!—meet me to-night in the Queen's gallery, at the couchée: I have that to say you must hear, alike for your own safety and my honor.

Rich. 'Tis uncourteous to refuse any request of so fair and favored a lady; but what you do me the honor to propose to me is impossible.

Stew. Impossible! You decline an interview with me, sir?

Rich. With regret; but my letters and flag delivered, I return this evening to the fleet.

Stew. To the fleet! To-night?

Rich. Yes! The Dutch still hold the sea. We can scarce fail to meet them ere long: and it will go hard, but I find all I have left now to hope for, a friendly bullet and a sailor's grave. [Retires up, L.

Stew. Richmond! Charles!—He shall not go! I know too well his fiery spirit! Come what may, he shall not throw away his life! and mine that hangs on it.

[Crosses R.

Re-enter BUCKHURST, ETHEREGE, OGLE, COURTIERS and LADIES, from the Park.

Buck. Nay; I never saw more masterly vollying than Sedley's in that last set.

Stew. (He shall not go!)

Pepys. My lord, it grieves me that I should have won the trifling matter of fifty pieces.

Buck. (c.) Console thyself: I will but owe it thee. Mistress Stewart, are you still obdurate, touching my suit for a ship?

Stew. (R. c.) I have been thinking of it since you went, my lord; and, on second thoughts, I will back your suit.

Buck. Now, bless you, for a true patriot. Having the leisure of a command, I shall write such sea-songs.

Re-enter CHIFFINCH, R. U. E.

Chif. The King!

Enter KING, excited, R. U. E.; he paces up and down; all fall back.

King. (c.) So, who won the wager?

Buck. (L. c.) Sedley, your Majesty. Rochester is drinking away his sorrow at the buttery.

Chif. [To KING] The Duke of Richmond awaits an audience of your Majesty.

King. The Duke of Richmond! [*Aside, to Miss STEWART*] Fair Mistress Stewart, a word. You pleaded with me for this Duke. Ha!

Stew (R.) And so, your Majesty most simply infers he may be the rival you threatened so soundly.

King. Beware! 'tis ill jesting on some subjects.

Stew. [*Smiling.*] Nay; if your Majesty is determined to suspect all I shall ask favors for, you shall have subjects enough; for I have another suit.

King. A suit! Command me!—but not for this Richmond.

Stew. Nay; my suit will be apt to offend the Duke of Richmond.

King. 'Tis granted, then!

Stew. Then, my suit is, that your Majesty take the Duke of Richmond's command—

King. 'Tis done!—

Stew. And give it—

King. [*suspiciously.*] To whom?

Stew. To my Lord Buckhurst, yonder.

King. (She loves not Richmond, after all.—And this Buckhurst has been hot after Nelly—and so I shall rid me of him.) At Britannia's bidding, my Lord Buckhurst shall have the command. Harkye, Master Pepys, the name of the Duke of Richmond's ship!

Pepys. [*advancing. L.*] The "Rupert," your Majesty! (He thought to take me at unawares.)

King. Now, my Lord of Richmond!

RICHMOND approaches, L. c.; and kneeling, offers his letters and flag.

Rich. I am charged to present to your Majesty, these letters from Sir Edward Spragge, containing an account of the last sea fight; and this flag, the trophy of the victory that hath attended your Majesty's arms!

King. 'Tis well! Sir Edward has selected a worthy messenger!

Rich. This duty done, I crave your Majesty's gracious leave to return to my command.

King. Not so! We cannot risk all our Dukes against these mechanical salt-butter Mynheers. We would have your Grace near our person.

Rich. Your Majesty, my best ambition is to devote my sword and life to your Majesty's service at sea.

King. And our good pleasure is, to keep both for use on shore.—Your command is filled up!

Rich. My command filled up!—before I am dead—who has prevailed with your Majesty to put this shame on me!

King. Nay—your flag is wanted by a fair lady. You are too gallant to regret the sacrifice

Rich. At least let me crave this fair lady's name?

King. (This might be but a woman's cunning to avert my suspicion from Richmond—I will watch them close.) [*Turning to RICHMOND.*] It is Miss Stewart! She hath begged the command of the "Rupert"

for my Lord Buckhurst yonder. See my Lord Buckhurst's commission made out for the "Rupert," Master Pepys.

Pepys. (L.) Doubtless, a most fitting choice, your Majesty. (Good lack, a precious captain! But I must speak him fair, the victualling may be a penny in my pocket.)

King. [*in a sprightly tone.*] 'Tis half-past three—who's for the play-house! Fair ladies and gentlemen all! My Britannia!—you see how I obey. To pleasure you, I have affronted the proudest nobleman in England.

Stew. I thank your Majesty! (My heart! How will this end?)

King. Miss Stewart, your fair hand! [*Gives his hand to Miss STEWART, the others take ladies and follow. Exeunt, c.*]

Rich. She has struck me in the face before them all!—She has broken my sword!—She has broken my heart! Revenge! No—it is not her fault—this is not my Frances—she is under some spell! What hath corrupted her nature thus?

Wild. [*striding suddenly to RICHMOND's side.*] The Satyr King! His look pollutes a woman—his touch turns her to stone.

Rich. Revenge! Curse him—curse him!

Wild. Curse not at all—it is a sin! DETHRONE HIM!

Rich. I will!

Wild. Swear it!

Rich. I swear! [*on his knees, c., WILD standing over him exultingly.*]

ACT II.

SCENE.—*Apartments in BUCKHURST's House. Door c., Door of Closet (upper part glass,) R. H. 3 E. Chairs, Furniture of the period. Table set for supper.*

Servants discovered arranging table.

1st. Serv. Come, bustle, my lord will be home anon.

2nd. Serv. And Mistress Gwynne with him; my lord will get into trouble.

1st Serv. No! Certain gentlemen, look you, carry off a certain lady—my lord is none of them—they bring her here, but still my lord takes no part. "Then comes my lord and finds the lady in his house: he cannot let her go till after supper; once at supper, as he is a nobleman of the Court and she a play actress—"

"*2nd Serv.* She stays to breakfast.—[*1st Servant nods.*] But suppose instead of all this she should strive to escape?"

"*1st Serv.* Let her settle matters with the locks and bolts."

"*2nd Serv.* Say that she screams hastily—what are we to do?"

"*1st Serv.* We must—[*puts his fingers in his ears.*]"

"*2nd Serv.* But say that she takes the law of him and calls us as witnesses?"

1st Serv. We have but to hold our tongues!

Enter PEPYS, ushered in by a 3d Servant.

3rd Serv. Mr. Samuel Pepys to see my lord.

1st Serv. My lord is not at home.

Pepys. I will wait till my lord's return.

1st Serv. When my lord returns, he desires to be private.

Pepys. Then will I but write the matter, and so retire.

1st Serv. As you will, sir.

[*Exeunt Servants, c.*]

Pepys. A strange request of the Duke of Richmond. My Lord Buckhurst takes his command from him, yet, lo! he would have me beg his lordship to let him serve on board the "Rupert" as a volunteer. Lord, that a duke should have no more pride! Sure love hath disordered his mind; and they say, too, he hath taken much to drink, a foul habit in a nobleman. Here's matter for my journal book. [*takes out book and peers about.*] Came to my Lord Buckhurst's at seven of the clock, where a table set for two persons, mighty neat, but found not my lord, in a fair apartment, [*goes peering about,*] with wrought chairs very curious; and one of the new Levant carpets, like my Lord Sandwich's, though methinks longer, but no ink that I see, nor pen to write with—which vexes me; and indeed it is strange a nobleman should be without ink. Stay, there's his closet, [*peeps through glass door,*] and on the table a standish and two pens. I will in, for it irks me till I have entered all this day's doings in my diary. And next his Grace of Richmond's petition, in writing, for my Lord Buckhurst. Lord, could my honest poor father, the tailor, see his Sam penning a duke's wishes to a Lord! Yet, let me not be puffed up, but comport myself humbly to my superiors. If I be grown great, what then! There be greater! Aye, even in our office, the more's the pity.—I to my Diary.

[*Enter Closet, R. H.*]

1st Serv. [*re-entering, c.*] Mr. Pepys—gone—that's well—[*takes out key and beckons off, c.*]

Enter two Bravos, carrying NELL GWYNNE muffled in a Cloak and Hood, a Chair is placed c., she is seated on it.—Bravos exeunt, c. Servant locks door outside, c.

Nell. [*removes her hood*] Now, is this a Christian land? I like a jest well, but this is past a jest: I won't put up with such ruffianly treatment—I will not! I'll be revenged! D'y'e hear? I'll scratch your eyes out! No! I'll do better! I'll love you and break your heart—you unmannerly scourer! It is my Lord Brouncker! No! he has too much sense. It is Harry Jermyn. No! he has too much conceit to think force necessary. It's Tom Ogle. No! he has not a crown to pay the bullies with. Plague on't! I can't be in a becoming rage till I know who has done it, because it may be some I like. Well, one thing is clear—here I am! And another thing is clear—that here *he* ought to be too. [*pause.*] The man must be a fool! carries off a woman by violence, and then, like Macbeth in the play, "We will proceed no further in this business." Oh! but we will though. [*examines napkins, &c.*] No cipher! No coat armor! This door leads to another room.—Oh! [*retreats.*] There sits my Tarquin!—I could not see his face, he was writing. This is a great man—carries off a play actress by violence, then turns his back, sits down, and pens away for the bare life. I know what he is now—he is a poet! I have one or two poets in my leading-strings. I will burst in and abuse him. How! In Billingsgate or

blank verse? Shall it be orange-wench or tragedy-queen? Pshaw! there is no *sport* in either — and I love sport. [*lifts her eyes to heaven.*] Oh! how I love sport! What shall it be! Virtuous despair! Oh, yes! that will be the best jest of all! [*claps her hands.*] But how to get him out! I can't go and say—"Come forth, sir, and offend my chaste ear with your indiscreet proposals." I'll cough him out. No! I have done that upon the stage eleven thousand times. Gad's my life! Nelly, do let us have something new. [*goes to door.*] I'll sob him out! He! he! ah! [*gives loud sob, then runs and sits down. Hides her face.*]

Re-enter PEPYS with inquiring air. Journal in his hand.

Oh! oh! (The deer has broke covert!) Oh!

Pepys. (R.) [*at door.*] A lady—in distress—in sore distress. I will console her! [*comes down to her.*] It grieves me, sweet lady—(I can't see her face.)—that one so fair—

Nell. (L.) Oh! oh!

Pepys. Should ever know sorrow.

Nell. Oh! oh! Why 'tis that solemn toad, Sam Pepys! You close sinner! I'll tell your wife!

Pepys. Why, 'tis pretty mad Nelly! Tell my wife! Now, heaven forbid! Tell her what! What is the matter, Mistress Gwynne?

Nell. The matter is, that I'll expose you to all the town for a sheep-faced rogue!

Pepys (Rogue! What can she mean? Hath she got wind of that matter of the vitualling—or the Bergen prizes—or the plate from Master Bowen? or—) [*hastily.*] Mistress Gwynne! Nelly! pretty Nelly!—some one has vexed you, and so you fall foul of your friend—sure we are fast friends.

Nell. Private friendship must give way to public morality.

"*Pepys.* Alas! child, what have you to do with public morality?"

"*Nell.* As little as yourself! But friend or not, I'll reveal your real character——"

Pepys. You would not be so cruel.

Nell. To all the world, and your wife, unless you instantly conduct me back to my lodgings in Drury Lane.

Pepys. With pleasure, sweet Nelly; with great pleasure! [*goes to door c.*] How now! The door is locked!

Nell. You knew not that—innocent soul!

Pepys. No! it was not locked when I entered.

Nell. You have the key of your own door. I presume.

Pepys. Yes! [*shows key.*] But this is not my door.

Nell. Not yours! Whose house is this?

Pepys. Whose should it be, but my Lord Buckhurst's; and he will be here anon; and he will find us locked up together. [*tries door.*] And he is a dare devil,—and did once say of me, if he caught me again in your tiring room, he'd slit my ears. [*shakes door.*]

Nell. (So, my Lord Buckhurst!) Hark! I hear a footstep. [*seizes PEPYS'S arm.*]

Buck. [*without, c.*] So she is here.

Pepys. Oh, let me go!

Nell. (More sport) Oh, Sir! stay with me; do not leave me to this vile seducer.

Pepys Nay; he won't hurt you. [*tries to escape.*]

Nell. Protect me! oh, protect me! [*seizes his wig, which comes off in her hand.*]

Pepys I must protect my ears. [*runs into closet. She gets his book from him.*]

Nell. [*looks at book.*] What's this? Diary! Odds's fish! Secrets! By your leave. [*tears out leaves.*]

Pepys. [*puts out his head.*] My journal book; I've lost my Journal book.

Nell. Here it is, man! [*tosses it to him*] (Minus a few pages, which I'll read at my leisure.) So, this is Buckhurst's doing! I'm glad 'tis Buckhurst, I like him. I'll make him smart for it. Oh! oh!

Enter LORD BUCKHURST, cautiously, c.

Buck. [*aside.*] (Trying to escape! I heard her at the door. In tears! Faith I am half ashamed. Pshaw! it is but a long face, and a high tragical protestation.) You see at your feet a true penitent.

Nell. Oh!

Buck. Love too hot to be quenched by reason has fired me to this act; but your tears put out my flame, and waken my sleeping conscience: never will I rise from my knees—[*kneels.*—till you pardon the temerity of my passion.

Nell. Oh!

Buck. (Sure it is Niobe and not Nell Gwynne.) Nay, sweet soul, be comforted; though you came here a prisoner, you remain a queen. I live but to obey your lightest words. (What a sullen devil it is.) [*knock at c. d.*] Come in!

Re-enter 1st SERVANT, cautiously, c.

1st. Serv. (L.) My Lord—[*hesitates.*]

Buck. (c.) What now? rascal!

1st. Serv. My lord, the chairmen that came with mistress—ahem—with this lady.

Buck Well! what of the dirty fellows?

Serv. They are in the hall, and will not go until—

Nell. (R.) [*sharply.*] Until they are paid for their villany.

Serv. Ahem!

Nell. Oh! oh!

Buck. [*sotto voice.*] Tell the knaves they shall be paid to-morrow.

Serv. I have, my lord; but they say they never risk their necks on credit.

Buck. S'death! let some of my rogues disburse.

Serv. We cannot; your lordship's rogues have received no wages from your honor these six months.

Buck [*about to search his pockets.*] No! I played with De Grammont last night; so 'tis useless to sound my pockets.

Nell. [*to SERVANT.*] Come hither, sir, if you please. [*sighs.*] How much do the ruffians demand?

Serv. [*crossing to NELL.*] Two Jacobuses each, and there are three of them, madam.

Nell. [*with sudden energy.*] What! six Jacobuses for carrying off an actress! 'Tis extravagant—'tis monstrous—'tis rank extortion!

Serv. So I said, Madam; but they say my lord promised.

Nell. Oh! if he promised! Honor among thieves—ahem! [*draws out a long purse, well filled.*]

Serv. [*after eyeing the purse a long time with surprise and joy.*] (Thank heaven, there is money come into our house.)

Nell. [*grumbling.*] It is very dear!—it is sadly too dear! [*gives servant money.*] [SERVANT bows respectfully, and exit, c. D.]

Nell. [*severely.*] You must learn to manage these things better.

Buck. Alas! If I fail, it is from lack of experience.

Nell. Then the next time you carry off a lady, consult the lady herself for the cheapest way to do it; don't let her cost you six Jacobuses; ten to one your lady will not be worth the six Jacobuses; and even if she is, she won't like to have to pay them herself. Ha! ha! ha!

Buck. Ha! ha! ha! You are the woman after my own heart. Sweet merry Nelly, I adore you! Ha! ha! ha!

Nell. And I like you; I ought to, for you cost me dear. He! he!

Buck. You will stay here, now you are here.

Nell. I will stay to supper, and then back to Drury Lane.

Buck. Not till you promise to be mine; and mine only; and mine for ever!

Nell. That I will not!

Buck. Why not?

Nell. Because that would be a bad bargain for me; worse than the six Jacobuses. Why, you rhyming rhodomantader, you've been telling the same tale to "Moll Davis, and Mary Knight, and Beck Marshall, and" every laced petticoat in Drury Lane.

Buck. Of course, I have; but I give them all up for ever. There is but one woman in the world henceforth, and that one is Nelly Gwynne. Probatum est—in secula sæculorum.

Nell. [*Tenderly.*] Is this true? Can so great a rover learn to stay at home?

Buck. For ever! Here I swear eternal fidelity! [*Lifts his hands.*]

Nell. Oh, my lord, such a sacrifice of all your most cherished habits fills me with gratitude. There, I will not be behind you: I hereby give up little Jermyn, Harry Sidney, and Hart, and Lacey, &c., &c., &c., &c., &c., and, like you, devote myself to one.

Buck. Swear, then, as I did!

Nell. (Now for it.) [*Attaches perruwig secretly to her wrist.*] I will swear as you did, and keep it, as you will.

Buck. Swear, then!

Nell. [*With sudden enthusiasm.*] I swear!

[*Raising her hand; perruwig hanging to her wrist; they eye it; she then detaches and throws it down, and clings to BUCKHURST.*]

Buck. What is that!

Nell. [*Innocently*] It is like the things you men wear on your heads. How did it come there? Is it yours?

Buck. Is it mine? Don't cling at me, you crocodile! No!—it's yours!

Nell. Oh, no!—my hair is stuck on by the roots—[*pulls her hair*]—feel!

Buck. He must be here! He is here!

Nell. No, he is not. Who?

[*Looks at closet.*]

Buck. You look towards that closet.

Nell. No, I don't. See, I look anywhere but there.

[*Looks in opposite direction.*]

Buck. (c.) Ah! [*Runs to closet; brings out PEPYS.*] So, Master Pepys! by all that's smug. [*To NELLY, pointing to his bald head.*] What do you call this?

Nell. (L.) The head of a goose. [*Puts wig on PEPYS.*] And now it is the head of a wise man.

Buck. You must answer this to me, sir!

Pepys. (R.) My lord, I vow I came here on public business—and—

Nell. No need to excuse yourself. [*To BUCKHURST.*] He has as much right to be in my company as you have.

Pepys. No, I have not, my lord. I affect her not, save as a lover of plays. I am a sober servant of His Majesty.

Nell. Ungrateful! [*Crossing, c.*] And, you, do you think to tear me from this worthy, though timid man? Desist, vain lord, I go nowhere without my solid, sanctimonious, smug-faced Samuel.

[*Embraces him violently.*]

Pepys. [*Repulsing her roughly*] Believe her not, my lord; 'tis a mischievous jade.

Nell. He comes into my tiring room, "lends me pins, and watches all my metamorphoses." My "tiring" wench calls him the scene shifter—he, he, he!

Pepys. Scandal! scandal! I went thither after Knipp; not after this madeap. I came here, to-night, with a suit to your lordship from the Duke of Richmond.

Buck. Pshaw! I'll no suits now, but one. Mr. Pepys! I am not jealous of you, forgive my heat; you must sup with us. Pleasure first, then business, like the ancient Germans. Who waits? Supper! supper!

Re-enter FIRST SERVANT, c.

Serv. The Duke of Richmond and Major Wildman would speak with your lordship.

Buck. Curse their puritanical faces! [*Gravely.*] My duty to his grace, and tell him I have with me, at this moment—hem! The Bishop of London.

Nell. And the Lady Abbess of Drury Lane. So, if he will walk up stairs, he shall sup with two rogues, and one jade. Two more plates sir!

[*SERVANT giggles.*]

Buck. [*Ironically*] Mr. Pepys, can you tell who is the master of this house?

Nell. [*Gravely.*] Why, don't you know? I am! Go, bid them in, sirrah!

Buck. Nay! they're a pair that understand no mirth; they'll turn our wine to verjuice. Serve supper in my closet, sirrah! Show the Duke and the Major in hither; say I'll join them [*Exit SERVANT, gaily.*] When I have drunk one round to thy health and our love.

Nell. [*Solemnly.*] And to the memory of my lost Jacobuses.

Buck. [*Suddenly turning.*] The devil take your Jacobuses!

Nell. Why, he has got them—ha, ha!

[*Exit BUCKHURST, leading NELLY, followed by PEPYS; all laughing, R. 3 E.*]

Enter RICHMOND and MAJOR WILDMAN, C.

Wild. (L.) Courage, sir; bend but your pride to this last suit to my Lord Buchkurst, and our road is fair before us.

Rich. (R.) Ay! I must drink the cup to the dregs.) Frances!

Wild. In all the ships are gallant spirits that chafe at the cowardice and o'erbearing ignorance of these gentlemen captains; the fire is smouldering; ere we have been a week in the fleet it shall break out in the "Rupert," first; but, before we go, these papers in duplicate, signed by the heads of our plot. One copy I take to the fleet; one is to be left with the Duke of Buckingham; thus we engage ourselves mutually. See, there is a blank left next to Buckingham; I would fain see that blank filled by a noble name.

Rich. [*Fills glass from table and drinks.*] I will think of it.

Wild. The feeble spirits are still led by titles; each known hand set here brings us a thousand meaner ones. Do you hesitate!

Rich. Yes! Major Wildman; to you it is a small matter to subscribe to the upsetting of the king: your place is among the people; but I was born by the side of the throne. We, of the nobility, lend our lustre to the crown, and draw our lustre from it. Besides, I am half drunk now, and, when I'm half drunk, I feel as if she was not all lost to me; wait till I'm sober. When I'm sober, I am utterly, hopelessly wretched, and could sign anything. Treason! sacrilege! perdition!—what you will.

[*Waves aside the papers.*]

Wild. (Patience! 'Tis in a high and holy cause; I must have his name; I will have it!)

Re-enter BUCKHURST and PEPYS.

Buck. (R. C.) My lord duke—major—your pardon that I have kept you waiting; but I was even now with Master Pepys, who has told me of your grace's wish.

Rich. (L. C.) Then, you know the measure of my desire now: to serve as a volunteer on board the good ship I once commanded.

Buck. I see no reason to deny your grace; and yet, now I remember me, his majesty said he needed you about the court; I must not offend his majesty, being now his captain.

Pep. (R.) Nay, my lord, his majesty knows the duke's wish; for I made bold to tell his majesty no later than yesterday.

Buck. And what did the king say!

Pep. The king but turned to Miss Stewart—(ahem! I forgot the Duke.)

Buck. And what did he say?

Pepys. He but shrugged his shoulders, and said, "How fond some folk are of salt water."

Rich. And what did *she* say?

Pepys. Nothing! Only laughed and shrugged her fair shoulders in reply.

Nell. [*coming forward, c.*] So you are the Duke of Richmond. I am Nell Gwynne. [*she curtsies. He bows coldly*]

Buck. (Confound the jade!) Now, Nelly! why couldn't you keep away!

Nell. I long to see a man everybody says is dying for love. 'Tis a malady I have never met with out of a play-book.

Re-enter first SERVANT, c.

Serv. A lady below would speak with my lord.

Buck. A lady—alone?

Nell. So my lord! Another already! Well, well!—Please go to her meanwhile the duke here and I! Ahem!

Buck. Nay, Nelly!—madcap! Did you ask her name?

Serv. Mistress Stewart!

Rich. Oh!

Buck. Mistress Stewart—my fair patroness! Say I await her commands. [*Exit SERVANT, c.*] Pray you all retire into that room but till I have received this lady's orders. [*goes up c. Excunt PEPYS and WILDMAN, R. 3 E.*]

Nell. [*to RICHMOND.*] Your old sweetheart! We will learn what she comes for—perhaps the wind has shifted in your favor.

Rich. Oh, no, no!

Nell. How can you tell? Who can answer for the wind or a woman? Come, courage—if she cannot see your deserts there may be as fair who can. (I like him—besides, 'twill be sport to torment Tarquin—and I will)

Excunt NELL and RICHMOND, R. 3 E.

Enter SERVANT, showing in, ceremoniously, MISS STEWART.

Buck. (L. c.) Madam! I am honored beyond thanks by this visit.

Stew. (R.) No compliments, my lord! You said this morning you owed me something in return for the command which the King gave you at my instance.

Buck. I am much your debtor for it.

Stew. Then, like a hard creditor, I come to you thus soon for a repayment, or rather to make myself your debtor in *my* turn.

Buck. Command me, sweet Mistress Stewart!

Stew. The Duke of Richmond would serve as a volunteer in the ship he lately commanded; this is not for his credit—it is madness—it gives great concern to all his sincere friends, amongst whom, in spite of appearances, I rank myself; my request is, that you will not permit him to serve under you.

Buck. I would fain obey you, Mistress Stewart; but, not to deceive you, the duke has been here already, when I in some sort acceded to his request. If I deny him now, I shall seem to go from my word.

Stew. [*coldly.*] My lord, your commission is not yet made out, it needs but a word from me, and—

Buck. Nay, my fair patroness, since you are peremptory, there is no more to be said. [*with energy*] The duke shall not set his foot on board the “Rupert” while I command her.

RICHMOND burst into room, followed by NELLY, who is endeavoring to hold him. WILDMAN comes to door and watches.

Stew. Oh, Richmond! In this company!

Rich. Why do you persecute me thus?

Stew. Sir!

Rich. Was it so great a crime to love you? Is every avenue of honor to be closed to me because you have forfeited men's good word?

Stew. Are you mad? What is our misunderstanding to these gentlemen?

Rich. What is it to you whether I go on board the “Rupert” or not?

Stew. Nothing; from this moment nothing! [*to Buck.*] My lord, I withdraw my request.

Nell. [*coming down, c.*] Nay, Madam! never mind him; he means not half he says.—[*confidentially.*]—He is in drink. [*retires up.*]

Stew. [*with disgust.*] (The excuse is well placed.)

Rich. And whose is the fault if I turn to that or any other means of oblivion? I was a gentleman, esteemed both loyal and brave; I loved my country, I loved honor, I loved you. In one day you robbed me of my faith in woman, and of my hopes of honor. Can you not leave me even the chance of death?

Stew. [*contemptuously.*] What! Is honor only to be gained on board the “Rupert?” The man who has honor in his soul is not a slave of circumstances. Be not so poorly lost, my lord; awake, and be yourself again. Honor has a thousand paths; take any one of them, and walk erect on it—a nobleman, and, above all, a man!

Rich. She bids me do this—*she* who has unmanned me.

Stew. [*with rising energy.*] A doubting heart has unmanned you! Duke of Richmond, you have been poisoned by unworthy suspicions, misled by unworthy associates. Recall your reason! Either I am what cowards and liars say I am—the king's minion—or, I am Frances Stewart. If I am Frances Stewart, to degrade yourself will be to lose me; if I be that other thing, I am not worthy a gentleman should ruin himself thus—soul, body, and heart, for me! Be yourself, my lord, for your own sake, if not for mine.

Rich. We take commands from our friends, not from our enemies; still less from a treacherous enemy like you—who still speak me fair to my face, but follow me behind with ill offices. You rob me of my sword, and now you come to my successor, and force him to refuse me a bare plank of the ship I once ordered as its captain. Ah! traitress! traitress!

Stew. This rude breeding suits the associates you have chosen. Henceforth I mingle no more in your affairs. [*to Buck.*] My lord, I withdraw my request.—You will find worse enemies than me

Nell. (That's for me!)

Stew. Are you sure I was your enemy? Then be content. [*solemnly.*] I am no more to you that which I was—I am nothing to you, and you are nothing to me! Unmannerly gentleman!—ungrateful man!—dishonored duke!—farewell! [*going, c.*]

Rich. Frances! [*MISS STEWART curtsies to others at door. BUCKHURST bows her off, c.*] Those papers!

Wild. [*giving them.*] You will sign them now!

Rich. With my blood, and that of all my house! [*WILDMAN stands exultingly, R. as RICHMOND signs on table, c. TABLEAU. NELLY, c. watching RICHMOND.*]

END OF ACT II.

[NOTE.—It is essential to the success of this scene that it should be played with great fire. The speakers rising above each other in turn; it should at the same time be played with feeling, being a duel between lovers, not a stranger's quarrel.]

ACT III.

SCENE.—*Spring Gardens.*—The Stage represents a Garden with cut hedges and trees.—Illuminated by lights in trees.—Arbors R. and L. (with turf banks,) in which are tables and seats. [Over trees, in back ground, are seen the towers of Westminster Abbey.] Moonlight.—Music at a little distance, R. H. Courtiers and Ladies promenading—some in upper Arbors, with wine.—Drawers moving about.

Enter BUCKHURST disguised as a drawer, R. U. E.

Buck. Plague on this jealousy! My fellow heard Nelly order her coach for Spring Gardens. So I must needs go and borrow the deaf and dumb drawer's suit to watch her. I shall soon find whether she has a gallant—and then if I must wear antlers, they shall be sharp ones. Ware Buckhurst and Buckhorn. [*retires, L. U. E.*]

Enter King. in white wig; a black patch over his eye; his hat slouched; with Chiffinch also muffled, L. U. E.

King. I scarce know how to believe thee, Chiffinch. Miss Stewart come hither! I knew Jennings—and Price—and Wells, were given to such gad-about tricks; but that *she* should join in the frolic! (There's more in this than appears—a rival, perhaps! Ha! but she has had warning)—Chiffinch! I'm well disguised!

Chif. Your Majesty looks like a Paul's captain, or a courtier out of favor.

King. But not too ill-favored to affect the ladies' company, eh? I would not be too ill-looking, neither.

Chif. Fear not, sir! Jupiter will peep under the bull's hide —

King. And horns. That same Jupiter chose ominous disguises. But how to know our own fair ones! They will be masked!

Chif. That mole on Miss Stewart's chin, your Majesty.

"*King.* Ha! That, like an amorous fly, drawn by the honey of her

"lips, hath been stricken motionless for the presumption. Her sole beauty patch—do I not know it—by sight, alas!" [*music.*] The company is thickest round the fiddles yonder. Well, when our subjects thus enjoy themselves, why not the King! [*music, louder and livelier.*] That's a Coranto—my legs itch to be at it—come man, come.

[*Exeunt, R. H.*]

Enter BUCKHURST, L. U. E.

Buck. Here she comes with the Duke of Richmond. I'll wait on them—their tongues will wag freely at supper, and I shall know how matters stand.

Enter NELLY, masked, RICHMOND, and PEPPYS, L. U. E.

Nell. [*taking off mask.*] What, all a-mort, my lord! Samuel, order some wine!

[*all entering arbor, L.*]

Pepys. I will. This is the deaf and dumb drawer, I know him by his cap and jerkin—an excellent knave. Supper—wine! Ah! I forgot.

[*writes on his tablets, and gives the order to BUCKHURST, R.*]

Exit BUCKHURST.—pause.

Nell. [*breaking out.*] Why, 'tis a man of stone! I vow this is cruel; you were merry enough but now.

Rich. Was I? I was drunk then.

Nell. Then, pr'ythee, be drunk again.

Re-enter BUCKHURST, R., with wine.

Rich. Wine, wine! stirrer of thick pulses; chaser of sorry thoughts. Let's change bloods with the grape, Nelly, till our muddy currents dance and sparkle like this.

Sings.

! The pleasures of love and the joys of good wine,
To perfect our happiness wisely we join.

Let every man stand,

With his glass in his hand,

And briskly discharge at the word of command.

Wine quickly recovers,

Poor languishing lovers,

Makes us frolic and gay—drowns all our sorrow;

But, alas! we relapse again on the morrow.] *

Nell. (A good song, but a vile ending) Samuel! throw off thy hypocrisy for three minutes and sing thy real mind.

Pepys. I will, Nelly—fetch me a lute.

Sings.

Be wise, and say you had warning;

To laugh is better than learning.

A song is better than fasting,

And good wine is worth the tasting.

Then keep your brain as light as you can.

An ounce of sorrow will finish a man.

RICHMOND and NELL join in chorus,—BUCKHURST also, involuntarily.

Pepys. Ha! what, an echo! Methought 'twas from a fourth mouth!

Rich. So, so! I'm a new man already. Here's to thee, Master

Pepys—Nelly.

Nell. My king of the sea! How thine eyes sparkle, rogue!

Rich. Buss me, Nelly.

[*kisses her.*]

Buck. [*behind.*] Oh!

Pepys. Eh! the deaf and dumb drawer. Oh! 'tis his way of asking me to drink. An ugly voice, but means well, poor lad.

Nell. And now for a toast, in solemn silence,—the memory of the departed—Buckhurst!

Buck. [*aside, behind.*] Ah! [*dashes down a plate.*]

Nell. The clumsy knave

Pepys. The memory of my Lord Buckhurst, and may the sea bring him wisdom, for he hath a plentiful lack of it. A shallow man; shallow, shallow; and hath the rarest conceit of himself.

Nell. Poor Buckhurst! But he has got your ship, and 'tis but fair you should have his Nelly.

Rich. Ay! change is the fashion; in love and liquor. This claret is too cold and thin; give me champagne and brimmer glasses. I would drown remembrance. Champagne is your only Lethe.

Pepys. Champagne, sirrah! Od-so! I had forgot! [*imitates champagne.*] Saw you how I made him apprehend me? Ha! ha! 'Tis a quick witted knave. Lord, how merry I could be were Knipp but here now.

[*fiddles without.*]

Nell. Hark; those dear fiddles! Come, a dance, a dance, and then to our wine again! Who is for sport follow me!

[*Exeunt RICHMOND and NELLY, R.*]

Pepys. Gone! Nay, then; I'll e'en look out for a petticoat myself. I'll take of these oranges to make myself acceptable.

[*Exit, L.*]

Buck. Curse the jade! Hang the Duke! Plague on 'em all! Oh, what an eruption of wrath have I had to keep down all this while! I'll follow them. So, my Lord Duke of Richmond—my sea monster of constancy. But the King shall know on't. He suspects him already with Mistress Stewart; and if this philandering with Nelly don't ruin him and her too! I'll lay Chiflinch on the scent. The memory of Buckhurst, eh! Zounds! my Lady Nelly, but you shall have cause to remember him.

[*Exit, R.*]

Dance.

Enter QUEEN, masked, MISS STEWART, MRS WELLS, and MRS. JENNINGS, shown in by OGLE, L. U. E.

Ogle. Here your Majesty will be safe from scourers and rufflers; they haunt where there is less light

Queen. Keep by us, Sir Thomas, for love of the saints! Your masks, ladies—your masks.

Ogle. At the table your Majesty will be less exposed to curious eyes.

Queen. [*to WELLS and JENNINGS.*] Go, girls, go, as Sir Thomas bids you. My Stewart, a word with you.

"*Mrs. Wells.* But, Sir Thomas, why come hither if we are to do nothing worse than sit mum chance, and eat cakes at a table!

"*Jenn.* Here is no sport, Winifred, as when Mrs. Price and I went selling oranges at Drury Lane the other night."

"*Ogle.* Nay, I'm as much for sport as you are, fair ladies; but in the Queen's company we must be mad with decorum."

"*Wells.* Well, for all her touch-me-not, Portuguese, air, 'tis hard if somebody be not rude to us." [they go up.

Queen. And you still think I have done ill to come hither, my sweet Stewart?

Stew. (R.) What says your Majesty's heart?

Queen. Alas! it knows but one constant thought—love for my husband. Oh, Frances! teach me how to win that. I love him so, but I know not how to make him love me.

Stew. And you would seek that secret in such a place as this?

Queen. (L.) I would learn what those women are whom he affects. I would see something real, be it what it may. At the court I learn nothing; there I have only respect and neglect.

Stew. May I speak my true mind to you?

Queen. Oh, do, do! You are the only one of them all who ever does, since they sent my Portuguese away.

Stew. No man's love, that deserves the name, was ever won by woman's stooping. Man's love is worship, and she that wins it must be above the worshipper.

Queen. But woman's love is not like man's.

Stew. The greater woman's fault! Our love should be a worship too, or if, spite of our better selves, it light on the unworthy, it is a shameful secret to be hidden and not a jewel to be worn and gloried in.

Queen. But could you so hide your love?

Stew. I could die in stifling its strong life rather than utter it when utterance is shame. Oh, dear lady and mistress, pray for him you love; suffer for him; die for him, if need be; but never to win return of passion, descend from your dignity of queen, your higher dignity of woman.

KING and CHIFFINCH appear behind, from U. E. R., watching. PEPYS on the other side, also watching.

Queen. Oh, Stewart! You recall me to my better self. I have done wrong to venture to this place. Let us return. Summon the others.

King. (C.) ('Tis she! So my nun in masquerade, I have you in the sin!)

Ogle. (R.) Your pardon, sir; these ladies would be private.

King. Tilly-vally, man. Such a bevy of vizards want a better guard than thee.

Ogle. How, now, thou saucy Jack!

Pepys. (Here'll be a scuffle. I'll withdraw.)

Ogle. Stand back, or I'll break thy rapier about thy ears.

Chif. (R.) [whispers *Ogle.*] Have a care Sir Thomas, 'tis the King.

Pepys. The King!

[As SIR THOMAS OGLE is about to kneel, the KING prevents him by a rapid gesture.

Queen. [to STEWART.] Oh! I am frightened—let us go.

Stew. No: he'll follow us—we are safer here in the crowd.

“*Mrs. Wells.* [to JENNINGS.] I knew somebody would be rude to us!”

King. Your pardon, fair ladies; but seeing you unattended in this ill-mannered place, I hasten to put my sword and service at your command.

Stew. We are not alone, sir—our friends will be here anon.

King. Then I will mount guard in their absence.

Stew. We accept no protection from a stranger.

King. A stranger! Nay—I know that black vizard intimately—and that—and that—and that.

Stew. The masks, perhaps; but not the wearers.

King. Are you sure? Shall I guess?

Queen. [to STEWART.] Should he discover us?

Stew. Fear nothing—this is no courtier! Who can it be?

King. Ha! No courtier! What, is my coat too threadbare, or my face too honest, that you presume so much!

Stew. Nay, if you were, we are no court ladies to fear you the more for that.

King. I'll be sworn you are none. No; the ladies of the court are too discreet to venture to such places. They take example of the Queen and that paragon of virtue—fair Mistress Stewart.

Stew. Once more, sir, we would be alone.

King. Nay—nay—four petticoats and never a man—'tis a slight upon the sex. Oh, you'll find me the humblest of slaves and the most diverting. I'll sing you the last new song—tell you the story of the last new play—give you the last bit of court gossip—'tis of that same Mistress Stewart.

Stew. (Why does Sir Thomas not rid us of this man?)

King. Listen, ladies—'tis the pleasantest tale—how the King told his paragon to the fair and frozen Frances.

Queen. Ha!

Stew. Sir—whoever you are—

King. Nay, Madam, if you are not interested, this lady appears to be. Let her hear how the fair and frozen Frances preached him a sermon—and sat before him, his whole duty to his wife.

Queen. [aside.] My good Stewart!

King. How the wicked king was abashed—and how he had a minute's mind to eschew gallantry and turn a good humdrum husband.

Queen. [aside.] My true Stewart!

King. But the Devil still whispered a doubt if the Stewart were as cold as she seemed. “She's a prude,” quoth Satan, “and follows her own diversions in secret.” So the King watched and watched—and the Devil watched too in the likeness of Will Chiffinch—and led the King to a certain garden, frequented by the looser sort of courtiers and cits, and there, who should the King meet—but this pink of purity—this statue of snow—this Diana in a laced petticoat—Mistress Stewart.

Stew. [forcing a laugh.] Ha! ha! ha! 'Tis as true doubtless as most court scandal.

King. But the story's not done yet. The King accosted her—she

was masked—and thought herself unknown—but the King seizing her wrist with one hand thus—

Stew. Unhand me, sir!

King. And flinging the other hand round her waist—so—

Queen. Holy saints!

Stew. Help! help!

King. [*fiercely.*] Let none stir! I say—pressed his burning lips to the tell-tale mole that made the mask useless—thus—thus—thus.

[*kisses her.*]

Queen. [*faintly*] No—no—not before my face!

Stew. The King!

King. Aye, the King, who now and henceforward holds Frances Stewart like any other woman, but that he loves her more than all the women in the world!

Queen. No! Charles!—My husband! [*saints.*]

King. The Queen!

Stew. Oh, this is well done, Sir. You have stained a spotless honor; you have broken a loving heart.

King. Silence—silence all—for your lives! Her name at least must not be whispered here! My poor Kate! I knew not she was here—look up, Kate! Here, bear her into your pavilion! Bring up her coach! Staunch that blood, some of you! Curse the women! Heaven forgive me! Chiffinch, send for Pierce at once! Bear her in I say—gently—gently!

[*Exit KING, OGLE, and CHIFFINCH, bearing off QUEEN. JENNINGS and WELLS follow, L. U. E.*]

Stew. I am suffocating! Poor Queen! Dear Mistress! Oh what is a King that he should dare trample thus on all that stands between him and sin!—The kind, good Queen!—it needed but this. I will go to her—but he is there—and how can she bear to see my face! No!—I must choke here! and there is none to help me now! Oh, Richmond! Richmond! you are right!—All feigning is ill and leads to worse ill.—I will humble myself.—I will ask his forgiveness. [*goes up.*]

Re-enter RICHMOND, NELLY, and PEPYS.

Nell. A fig for Jacob Hall, after this! Why, you've danced the breath out of my body, and I thought I was a match for most partners—give us some wine, Sober Samuel.

Stew. (*æ.*) (Richmond! and with that woman!—Oh! he did not love me as I loved him!—how soon he has found consolation!—how low he has stooped for it! What is left me now? Pride, silence, and a breaking heart!)

Rich. Come, my Florimel! One round more, and then home [*sighs.*]

Nell. Home! And before the sun! Not I!—We'll but breathe ourselves; and thence once more to the fiddles—[*the distant boom of guns heard, &c.*] Hark! What's that!

Rich. [*Listening.*] It sounds like far off firing! Where should it be!

Pep. I'll go and learn.

[*Exit, L. U. E.*]

Re-enter KING; he goes to MISS STEWART.

King. (R. c.) Madam! Mistress Stewart!

Stew. (R.) The Queen, Sire. How fares it with the Queen?

King. Better, much better. Pierce says 'tis nothing: the blood was not from the heart! and now let me take you from this place, it fits you not.

Stew. As ill as it fits your Majesty. I will go alone!

King. Will you not trust me! [*Guns.*] What's that?

Rich. [*Who has been listening.*] It is the roar of distant cannon—the night is clear—cannon at sea!

Re-enter PEPYS.

Nell. Well! How scared thou look'st, man! What is it?

Pep. They say 'tis the Dutch guns at Chatham. Merely on us!

Nell. Oh! would I were a fire-ship to blow the Dutchman out of the water!

King. (An enemy's guns—and in English waters!)

Rich. De Ruyter at Chatham, and I not there! I owe that to her!

Pep. There they go—boom! boom! boom! Pray heaven the yard may be safe!

Rich. The sound makes me mad! Ship or no ship, I'll but see Wildman, take from him those papers, and leave them with the Duke of Buckingham, and then to the fleet. Good-by, Nelly.

Nell. What—will you go? Heigho! At least, promise to see me to-morrow at twelve.

Rich. Yes, yes, at twelve; good-by.

Nell. Nay; we must have a parting health!

Rich. No! Those guns have sobered me. They ring the knell of England's honor in my ears! Yes, I will give you a health: the health that should be drunk to that ignominious music! Fill your glasses high, ladies and gentles of the Court, for I drink to the memory of a man! By birth a yeoman, and by soul an emperor. Raise your glasses high, dwarfs, for I drink to a giant. Whiles he lived, no Dutchman swept the narrow seas! no Castlemaines dishonored the high places, and insulted the matrons of the land. Vice and folly trembled at his eye, and all good things lay safe beneath his mighty shadow. He died, and then dogs took courage and tore the great man's body from the tomb—from hallowed ground; but no power can tear him from his immortal sepulchre in England's heart. [*Rises and removes his hat.*] Honor and reverence to those dishonored bones that were the Protector; aye! the protector of every honest man, and chaste woman in the land; and the scourge of cowardly soldiers, of unchristian prelates, of cutpurse nobles, and lascivious kings!

King. Such speeches as these lay the tongue that utters them in the dust.

Stew. Oh, heed him not, Sire! he is drunk, he is mad; and I am to blame for it. You know, Sire, to serve my Lord Buckhurst, I caused your Majesty to disgrace this, your zealous servant.

Re-enter CHIFFINCH, L. U. E.

Chif. The Queen is come to herself, and asks for your Majesty.

King. The Dutch at Chatham! Cromwell's memory pledged in my hearing! You shall dearly abye this! I come, Chiffinch. Oh, what! with secret traitors, open enemies, a cold mistress, and a loving wife, who would be the King of England! [*Guns cease.—Exit, L. U. E.*]

Rich. Farewell, Nelly.

Nell. Nay; I'll not budge this hour yet.

Rich. Then, I leave you to the charge of Master Pepys. I have urgent business with Major Wildman. Those papers safe in the Duke's hands, I'll straight to Chatham. A Dutch bullet may save me from the guilt of treason yet! [*Exit, L. U. E.*]

Stew. Richmond gone alone! He has left his base companions. I'll follow and tell him all. [*A confused noise heard outside, R. U. E.*] What's that!

Nell. Go, and learn what bear's loose, Samuel.

Pep. That way the noise is.

[*Exit, R. U. E.*]

Stew. A crowd rush hitherwards! What's that cry! Ha! The plague!

[*A confused crowd of men and women rush across stage, crying: 'Fly! fly!' from R. U. E.*]

Re-enter PEPYS, haggard, and in terror, R. U. E.

Nell. What! what!

Pep. One stricken with the plague hath escaped from his house into the gardens. He comes this way—see! see! Save yourselves Fly! fly! [*Exit, L.*]

Stew. [*To NELL.*] Are you not afraid, Madam?

Nell. Yes; but running wont help us; best stand firm.

[*More people pass over, with confused noise.*]

Enter MAJOR WILDMAN, R. U. E., pale and delirious, in his shirt and breeches; dress torn and wet.

Wild. Ha! The fiends fly from me. Ha! ha! ha! Avaunt Sathanas—I am strong—smite—smite—and spare not. The father's head fell—why not the son's? 'Tis written the saints shall reign a thousand years. (The papers—have we not set our hands—see—see—we have no traitors—no traitors—I answer for the Fleet—look how they throw up their caps. Hark! For God and the people! Hush—hush—good friends! Not yet—not yet. I must see the papers safe And the Duke comes not—as he said. How dark it is! Lights! lights! I will go—but I am weak and weary—torment me not. What fire is this—in my brain, and in my heart? I parch—Oh, for heaven's sake, water!) The papers! See them safe. 'Tis life and death! The fiend has me by the throat! I'm burning—burning! Water! water! The papers! Water! Will no Christian bring water to a dying man? [*Falls.*]

Stew. Poor soul! I will, though I take death in exchange.

[*Goes to table and gets water.*]

Nell. Oh, no! not you; let me go. My life is worth far less than yours. You are a lady of rank.

[*Runs off, U. E. L.*]

Stew. And claim the privilege of rank: the post of danger. [*Gives MAJOR WILDMAN water.*] How greedily he drinks.

Wild. And angels came and ministered unto him. The papers—

Stew. These papers lie heavy on his mind—they should be of moment. [*Takes papers.*]

Wild. Aye—so, so—thanks—you'll keep them—remember, all have signed—blessings on you, you have the papers—I can sleep now—

[*He falls back.*]

Stew. He has fainted, poor soul! But these papers—there was a fearful import in his broken words. Let me see. [*Opens papers.*] What's here! A compact against the King! Treason! I am the instrument of heaven to save him.

[*Enter hastily NELL GWYNNE with men and torches, U. E. L., who surround WILDMAN.*]

Stew. To the King.

[*Rushes off, L. H.*]

[*NELLY kneels over WILDMAN; the men hold their torches up so as to light the scene.*]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE—*An apartment in the Duke of Richmond's house, richly furnished, C.—A velvet curtain drawn across entrance to inner room R. C.—A private door, near which a bay window, L. 2 E. Door L. H.*

Enter SERVANT, ushering in with great respect Miss STEWART, L. H.

Stew. My lord bade me say he should be here at twelve of the clock, —'tis upon the stroke. Pray you be seated, Madam. [*places chair, bows.*]

[*Exit, L.*]

Stew. I am in Richmond's house! This boldness may be mis-read; but it is for his salvation, and for mine! How changed he is! It is despair that drives him to dice, and wine! If words of mine can do me right, and raising me, lift him to what he should be,—to what he is,—shall pride of blood, or maiden daintiness withhold them? I will see him,—speak to him,—and he shall believe me, too, before I quit this house. It is here he sits, on this chair, methinks,—dear Charles! [*sits in chair and smiles.*] And here he writes, and there is the cabinet where he stores his papers and precious things. Does he treasure aught of mine? I keep all his hand has traced. [*eyes drawer wistfully.*] Nay, that were ungenerous?—Why does he not come? I will watch for him at the window. [*stands at window.*] How shall I speak to him?—how soothe his wounded spirit?—how bring him back to belief of me, to respect of himself?—how make him once more the Richmond I have loved,—love still! The star of chivalry,—the flower of manhood,—the soul of honor! Love will teach me how. Yet he comes not. Ah! a coach draws up at the door. 'Tis he! No, it is a woman. She approaches the door now. Oh, turn,—turn! [*starts.*] 'Tis the actress. How fair she is; she is coming here,—here, where I am! "What said that lacquey? Twelve o'clock,—'tis a set meeting. I am too late, too late!" [*wrings her hands.*] This is no place for me! [*going.* NELL speaks

without.] She will find me!—"she will make me the town talk!—she will say we met on the same errand! Oh, shame!" Is there no escape! Ah, this curtain! [*draws curtain a little on one side.*] Duke of Richmond, you have compelled me to conceal myself,—to hide my head before such as she! Oh, Richmond!—Richmond!

[*retires behind curtain, R. C.*

Nell. [*without.*] Less ceremony, my good man,—I can make my entrance without a call boy.

Enter NELL, L. H.

Not here! Faith, this is gailant! Well, I'll examine the field of battle, that is to be, when we've tired of one another. So,—a private door, locked! That is to put us away when a rival comes: and here a curtain,—that's to put our rivals away when *we* come. A cabinet! brimful of secrets! and unlocked [*hesitates a moment*] Then what right has he to leave me alone with it? [*opens drawer*] "Log of His Majesty's ship 'Rupert.'" Log! I'll no logs, save to burn at Christmas tide! What's here? Letters,—tied with blue ribbon in a true-lover's knot,—a woman's hand too! By-and-by. Letters,—and here a brooch, and a love-lock! Oh, ho! glossy, soft, and black as jet! Yes, this is an old Cupid's cable, and once anchored the good ship Richmond: "but what then,—the lock always outlasts the love, as this shall,—for it is my turn now. I like this duke,—he mopes and drinks, and is riding post-haste to the devil, for a woman,—signs he has a heart. I'll cure him of his green sickness,—it will be a charitable deed, and good sport, too, while it lasts." Steps! here he comes, and before I have read his letters! [*flies to seat*

Enter RICHMOND, hastily, L. H.

Rich. Thy pardon, fair Nelly, that I have made thee wait.

Nell. Oh, I have had companions here.

Rich. Companions!

Nell. Your four walls. [*aside*] Oh, lud! there's one of the drawers not shut.

Rich. As good companions I fear, as their master, the kinder of thee to venture to so dull a house.

Nell. Well, now I am here, what are you going to say to me!

Rich. What but the old tale—how I admire thee.

Nell. No, you do not. Tell me what you admire me for!

Rich. For thy frank and sunny temper. Thou art thyself. I am sick of hypoerisy. Feigning hearts, and false, smooth faces have tortured me to death. Thy open brow, without mask or veil, have comfort for me. I come to it like a desert traveller, to fresh, clear water.

Nell. Were that in rhyme, now, 'twere worth a round from the pit! Well, you have hit my good point—I am an honest woman—

Rich. How long could so airy a spirit put up with so dull a rogue as I, Mistress Gwynne?

Nell. Nell!

Rich. [*sadly.*] Nell!

Nell. No ? not that sort of Nell ; I'm not ' the knell, that summons you to Heaven or to '—the cellar under the stage.

Rich. Thou art a merry soul.

Nell. I'll make you another, only you must not be froward, but take my physie like a good child.

Rich. Shall I love thee ?

Nell. I doubt if you know how. He who loves Nelly must not be jealous—I am so fond of sport ! Jealousy is not a fit companion for a hero ; it drives you to mad courses—drink, and dice, and—spare my blushes for the rest.

Rich. Then thou knowest ; oh, cure me. Nelly—no matter how—teach me to forget her—thinking of whom—I forget myself. I have been mad—I am mad ! She is destroying me. Good, kind, honest Nelly, help me to root out of my heart, one that is unworthy a place in any true man's. Do this, and be the poor, lost Richmond's friend

[MISS STEWART *shows her face pale as death at the curtain.*

Nell. Yes ! But before I mix my physie, let me know the sickness I am to cure you of. Have you loved Mistress Stewart long ? Have you been true to her ! Odd's bodikins ! What a question ! Of course not !

Rich. My love for her was the centre of my soul ! If I led a severe life in those dissolute days, it was lest she should ever blush for me ; if I sought for honor in war, it was that she might draw more pleasure and more pride from my love. She was my sun ! The sun is set, the night and the frost are upon me, and I am withered away. Would you know how I loved her—compare what I was when we were one in heart, with what I am now—a Damascus blade rusted, an escutcheon blackened, a ship rotting on the shore, an idle man, a drunken duke.

Nell. I envy you ! [*sadly.*] I could not love anybody enough to be miserable for them.

Rich. My love is all misery now——

Nell. No, not all—why an' you go to that, the soul of man brings grief that the brutes escape for want of a soul. Yet who would lose,

“ Though full of pain this intellectual being,

These thoughts that wander through eternity.”

'Tis vile taste to quote John Milton, but the roundhead sings better than our poets, that have no head, round or square. Still keep your soul tho' 'tis the seat of suffering ; still keep the choicest jewel of that soul ; your love for Mistress Stewart. [*RICHMOND kisses her hand.*] True I could cure you but how ? Blunt the pain by deadening the heart that feels it—villanous surgery ! [*rises.*] but no noble nature was ever corrupted or lowered by me, nor ever shall ; for all the world contains I would not have that sin on my hands now, nor its remorse on my soul when I come to the end of my time.

Rich. How little the world knows you ! Yours is a heart of gold !

Nell. Heart of a fiddle ; come, sit by me, and tell me, what has Miss Stewart done, that you despair ?

Rich. Done ! Is she not quoted in all mouths the royal favorite ; all know how this King's favor is purchased by her sex ?

Nell. We'll grant you that—what besides?

Rich. Seeing I know this damning truth, her heart has so turned against me, that she has robbed me of my command, leaves me to rust here, a thing for these flyblow courtiers to spend their buzz on.

Nell. Hum! What more?

Rich. Is't not enough! Her fair fame is soiled—her nature corrupted—till she hates me whom she once loved.

Nell. How fast you go! Humph! The way to read a woman is to put yourself in her place, if you happen to be a woman. Now let us apply this test; I am Mistress Stewart, you are my lover—the King woos me; if I favor the King, you are in my way: I should say to the King “Here's an ass that loves me, but luckily he loves laurels too—make him an admiral—send him to sea—and get him handsomely knocked on the head.” But say I favor you—

Rich. What then?

Nell. Why then, scholar, I keep you by me for my own pleasure, and thereby check to the King.

Rich. Mistress Gwynne!

Nell. Nelly! What! Is daylight breaking in? Oh, I forgive you; you are a novice and a hero. but that Old Rowley, with his experience, should be gulled by her into taking your command, and keeping you at the court here—that does amaze me! Lucky for both his Majesty and you, I am not a man—I would whip her away from both of you—a pair of nin—com—poops! Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Rich. Nelly!

Nell. What? 'Tis Nelly now: yes, many things are possible; Portsmouth may be virtuous, the sky may rain Burgundy, Nelly may turn Puritan. But that she who clipped your wings lest you should fly away from you—that this woman loves you not—is impossible!

Rich. Oh, what comfortable words are these. [*hesitates.*] And yet the King's pursuit of her—

Nell. Is hot as ever! A sure proof the man has not caught her yet! Must I teach you the alphabet of your own sex as well as mine?

Rich. Heaven bless the tongue that speaks these words; they are balm to my brain, they are blood to my veins, and sunshine to my heart! What fiend has blinded me to reasons that carry conviction as you speak them? God bless you! You have conquered. I believe in her—I love her once again!

Enter SERVANT, with note, L. H.

Serv. These from the Duke of Buckingham, my lord.

Rich. From Buckingham. [*reads direction.*] Haste—post haste! I am a conspirator! Oh, why did I ever plot? My love is true, I will engage no further in this desperate business. But what does he write? [*reads.*] “Come to me on the instant, our sky clouds—Warehawk.” Some danger toward—nay, then, I cannot fall off. [*to NELL.*] Your pardon, I must to the Duke of Buckingham, but——

Nell. But you would come back and hear La Belle further. Well, shall I wait your return?

Rich. Pr'ythee do; 'twill be a crowning charity, sweet Nelly.

[*Exit, L. H.*]

Nell. I've lifted twenty years off that man's head. How the fellow treads now! Ah! haughty prude! you will never know how much you owe the greatest coquette in London.

[*Miss STEWART comes from behind curtains.*]

Methinks I see her, if one should tell her of this. I could act her now, as with her queenly brow and falcon eye she holds out her dainty fingers to Nelly, thus,—“Here is your reward—you may kiss the Stewart's hand.”

Stew. (R) [*in a faint voice.*] Mistress Gwynne!

Nell. (L.) Who calls! A lady! Mistress Stewart or her ghost!

Stew. It is I—Frances Stewart. I was behind that curtain.

Nell. What the plague—she must have heard every word! What! Did you hide yourself to listen?

Stew. Oh, no; madam! I was here awaiting my lord, when you came; I hid myself; I feared you would expose me; I was like the world—I did not know you, madam.

Nell. Well, Mistress Stewart, proverbs are not always true; you listened—but heard some good of yourself! The best I can make on't now, is to call my coach and leave you to the duke.

Stew. What, before I have said one word to you?

Nell. (She seems moved.)

Stew. Ah, I understand! You think I am ungrateful; they have told you I am cold. Yes; I am cold to the false-hearted, Mistress Gwynne; I live in a court—I live among reptiles that crawl about me and freeze my heart to stone. But you have showed me this day a great heart—an honest heart within a mile of Whitehall; and I long to warm myself at it, but you turn away from me. What! You lay me under so huge a debt, and will take no payment! That is unkind—that is not like you.

Nell. Mistress Stewart! Why, it is a woman like myself!

Stew. In good faith it is; and what would you do had I served you as you have served me this day?

Nell. Something, I'll be sworn, that would noways become Mistress Stewart.

Stew. But what would you do?

Nell. Faith, I should take the impudent jade round the neck, and give her two great smacks on each cheek. Ha! ha! ha!

Stew. Ah, so! [*kissing her warmly.*] And so. Oh, my heart is too full to speak! [*embraces her.*]

Nell. Don't cry; there is nothing to cry about, except that I am not worthy of your kisses; let me go, you forget who I am—Nell Gwynne, the actress.

Stew. Hush, hush; I believe not a word the court says of you—I never will; hear how it talks of me. You have an honest heart—how have I pined for one! Oh, lay that honest heart to mine!

Nell. You, sweet lady! I love you—I would die to serve you! [*whimpers.* *Miss STEWART dries NELLY's tears with her handkerchief.*]

Re-enter hastily the DUKE OF RICHMOND—he stands transfixed with surprise.

Nell. The duke ! [*about to recoil. Miss S. holds her hand.*]

Stew. (c.) Yes, I am here ; I was trying to thank this good soul, and could find no words ; forgive me, Richmond, as I forgive you. How have we misread each other !

Rich. (L.) What ! my own noble Frances ! You ask me to forgive you ! Me ! an infidel, who doubted of the sun, because a cloud came between me and its glorious presence.

Stew. Nay, 'tis I am most to blame ; I left the one safe track—the path of truth. To shield my lover, I stooped to deceive the King ; and I did not deceive the King, and I deceived my lover ; henceforth Frances Stewart walks in the narrow path of truth, aye, though it lead her unto death !

Rich. I will approve my penitence by a life of trust and love.

Stew. Forget the past, dear Richmond ; we know each other now. [*turns to NELL.*] God bless you for it. And once to know now, is it not to know for ever ? [*they embrace.*]

Stew. I will tell the King all ; how can he hurt you ; you are an Englishman, and break no law ; therefore the law will shield you, aye, though it be against a King. Cromwell has not lived all in vain.

Rich. Madman that I was ! I had the vantage ground, and I have left it ; curse on my hot head.

Stew. Think no more of the past, my dearest, look forward to our future—it seems so bright, so beautiful !

Rich. Heaven grant it may be so ! [*aside*] Wildman missing with those papers—the compact and our names—that bodes ill.

Nell. (R.) [*to STEWART.*] The Duke is disturbed.

Rich. Forgive this trouble, 'tis not for myself, but for thee, for thee, my precious one.

Nell. I understand. He's right, fair mistress you are in danger, but be ruled by me, and I'll set you out of shot of the King. But you'll obey me, both of you ?

Rich. You have a title to my obedience.

Stew. A better still to mine.

Nell. Then you will be ruled by poor little Nelly, great folks, upon your honor ?

Rich. Upon our honor !

Nell. Then upon my honor, you shall be married, ere the day's ten minutes older—aye, in this house.

Rich. Dearest, we have promised to obey.

Stew. Married ! Here ! Now ! Impossible !

Nell. Impossible. quotha ! Try, you'll find it easier than to undo.

Stew. This is too sudden.

Nell. Would you sacrifice his happiness, and to ceremony ? The husband can defend, where the lover is powerless. I hold you to your word.

Stew. But there is none to stand by me at the altar, no witness, no clergyman.

Nell. I'll find all. For a father—the first sober gentleman will serve. [*goes to window, L. 2. E.*] Ha, in the nick of time—Master Pepys and

his modest brother. [*beckons.*] He shakes his perriwig; nay, then, the magic leaves must compel. [*shakes leaves of diary*] I thought so!

Enter PEPYS, L. H.

Pepys. You called, fair Nell. Ha, Mistress Stewart! My lord!

Nell. This lady is to marry that gentleman, and you are to give her away.

[*STEWART and RICHMOND retire. PEPYS beckons NELL aside.*]

Pepys. Give her away—to him! His Majesty's ward, and a maid of honor, is not given away like a bona roba at a Fleet-marriage—no, I must think of my advancement. I take no part in such mad doings!

Nell. Say you so?

Pepys. Nay, more. The King shall know of this.

Nell. [*takes papers from her pocket.*] And the King shall know of this—[*reads.*]—"To Whitehall, and there in the matted gallery——"

Pepys. The missing leaves of my journal book!

Nell. "But Lord, to see how the poor shallow King is fooled of all—and what small respect he hath of himself——"

Pepys. Nay, Mistress Nelly——

Nell. "And is grown of late methinks, marvellous ill favored." His majesty will relish this.

Pepys. Pr'ythee, for mercy's sake——

Nell. "Thence to the Mulberry garden, with Knipp, telling my wife, poor wretch! I had business in the office——" Mrs. Pepys will like that!

Pepys. Nay, nay, Nelly, hold—give me those leaves, and I'll do your bidding in all things.

Nell. Undertake then, and with a good grace.

Pepys. [*to RICHMOND and MISS STEWART.*] Fair lady, my good lord, I esteem myself happy to be thus trusted, dispose of my poor self as you will.

Rich. [*to NELLY.*] But, the clergyman.

Nelly. Master Pepys, call brother John! He's below—I saw him.

Pepys. But if the King comes to know, 'twill be the poor lad's ruin.

Nell. [*reads slowly.*] "At the office, counting of my gains from the last prizes. The Lord forgive me!"

Pepys. Nay then, I must [*to MISS STEWART and RICHMOND.*] My brother waits below and will be honored by this trust. ('Tis an undone youth) [*Exit L.*]

Rich. How long the moments seem till we are one!

Re-enter PEPYS, with JOHN PEPYS, L. 1 E.

Pepys. Thy congée, John. My brother, madam. Plague on't. [*aside to JOHN.*] 'Tis great advancement for thee, John.

Nell. Reverend sir, you are to marry this lady to this gentleman.

John. I will bind them as fast as e'er a bishop in the land. I've the rubric in my pocket.

Pepys. [*aside to NELL.*] And now give me my leaves.

Nell. What! before the knot is tied, old fox? No!

Pepys. [*aside*] There is no escape! John, thou art marvellously favored in this; remember, 'tis to me thou owest it.

John. I am bounden to you, brother.

Nell. In then, father and priest.

[*Exit* PEPYS and JOHN to inner room, R. C.]

Now [*to* Miss S. and RICH.] I will be your sentinel!

Rich. Was ever man so happy, yet so fearful; my love, I ought to bid you pause—reflect, ere you take this step; yet, how can I? Heaven forgive me—how can I?

Stew. It were in vain—I would not desert you now. The hand that now takes thine, throws down defiance to a King; but if destruction fall, it falls on two souls knit strong in one. Come!—you believe I love you now?

[*Exit* with RICHMOND, R. C.]

Nell. I would go too, but I fear I should laugh and spoil the ceremony; I always laugh at the high tragical—but I will peep! They are all kneeling! Ay, the place is holy—how solemn that lad's voice sounds; the woman weeps, the man is pale. It is a high and holy contract! They join hands before the priest—those are great words—"Through evil report and good report, for better for worse—till death us do part." May that be far off! Heaven's blessing be on you! Yours is a sacred union. It seals the love that makes hearts pure, and fits them for a better world than this. I shall never stand so before the priest! The Church will never give me Heaven's blessing! No honest man will so love me! I shall die Nell Gwynne—and men will say I was a wanton! Who will believe my heart was not corrupt! Oh, woe is me! woe is me! Heaven pity me! Heaven help me!

Enter suddenly MAJOR WILDMAN, pale and dishevelled, L. H.

Wild. (L.) The Duke of Richmond, madam. I must see him on the instant.

Nell. (R) Ah!

Wild. You look scared.

Nell. Small wonder: are you not he we saw death-stricken in Spring Gardens.

Wild. Madam! I have wrestled back to daylight from the threshold of the grave! But this is no time to speak of past dangers. Where are those papers? Did you take them,—have you them? Speak, for the love of heaven!

Nell. You terrify me. The papers are safe. Mistress Stewart took them,—she was there.

Wild. The other lady! But where are they now?

Nell. In safe keeping. She gave them to the King himself!

Wild. To the King!

Nell. Seeing you so troubled about them, she read, and saw they were treason; as you could not give them to his Majesty, she did.

Wild. She has struck our heads from our shoulders!

Nell. How!—They were not for the King!

Wild. Disguise is useless now. You are the Duke's friend.

Nell. To the death!

Wild. They were a compact for the King's undoing; signed by the Duke of Buckingham, myself, the Duke of Richmond—

Nell. Richmond! Oh this is terrible!

Wild. I came to warn him. A ship waits in the river to carry us to Flanders. He must fly with me. Bring me where he is.

Nell. It cannot be. Fly you. I will warn him.

Wild. Yes!—I must fly; but not till I have put him on his guard; nor till we have taken vengeance on the traitorous hand that has betrayed us

Nell. She knew not what she did. Leave her and him to my care and heaven!

Wild. Where is he?

Nell. There!

[*The curtain is drawn by NELLY. The DUKE and DUCHESS are discovered at the Altar hand in-hand; others grouped round.—Music.*

Wild. Mistress Stewart, too! What does he, hand-in-hand with the woman who has destroyed him?

Nell. Hush! Man and wife!

[*WILDMAN staggers back, and act-drop descends.*

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE.—THE KING'S CLOSET. *Folding doors, c. Secret door, R. C. Door of Inner Chamber, R. 3 E. Door, L. Fire-place, R. 2 E. Tables. Chairs. Guitar. Great many papers in confusion. A lighted taper on table. KING discovered in velvet dressing-gown, sealing letters.*

King. When I first came to this seat of thorns, called a throne, I had a father's murder to avenge. I raised a scaffold for his murderers. Since then, I have returned to my natural humor, and been an easy King—the tool of intriguing men, the dupe of intriguing women, till the name of King bids fair to become a laughing-stock in this England. I must rear the scaffold once more.

Enter CHIFFINCH, L.

Chif. The Lord President.

King. Admit him, and attend me in the robing-room.

[*Exit CHIFFINCH, R. 3 E*

Enter SHAFTESBURY, L.

We sent for you, my lord, that you might prepare the Council for the grave matter to be laid before them this day. Read that paper.

Shaft. [After examining paper.] Hum! It is treason. "A solemn league and compact to dethrone the King," and signed [Pause.] Has your Majesty read these signatures?

King. No; I knew myself too well. You read the names, my Lord.

Shaft. The Lord Grey, of Wark—

King. Ah! I refused him a place in the Exchequer. I meant it kindly; he has taken it ill. Go on.

Shaft. Roger Palmer, Earl of Castlemaine.

King. Ah! I have injured him. He has a right to butt at me. Go on *Shaft.* Major Wildman.

King. Ha, ha! a fifth monarchy man—the old leaven—he is a mad-man, and nothing worse. Go on; why do you pause?

Shaft. George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham.

King. My Lord! [*Starting up.*] Do you mock me?

Shaft. It is, indeed, his hand and seal. Charles—

King. One moment, sir—one moment—this was mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted. Oh! who would be a king? Proceed, my Lord.

Shaft. Charles Stewart, Duke of Richmond.

King. Ha! [*Starts up.*] Impossible!

Shaft. Nay, Sire, see!

[*KING looks at name, and keeps the papers.*]

King. Frances Stewart! Oliver's health! Treason, for once, I thank thee. I've heard enough; more than enough. To the Council, my Lord. Open this black business in what fashion you will; I will but dress, and follow you.

Shaft. The papers, Sire, shall I take them?

King. No; let the clerk fetch them. I would go over the names. I may read them now. I know the worst and the best.

[*SHAFTESBURY bows, and exits, c.*]

Enter PAGE, L.

Page. His Grace, the Duke of Richmond, Sire, requests a private audience.

[*KING puts papers on table.*]

King. The Duke of—

Page. The Duke of Richmond, your Majesty.

King. A private audience! Does he come to assassinate me? Well, we shall be man to man. I will receive his Grace here after the Council [*Exit PAGE, L.*] The Duke of Richmond plots against my throne, and, no doubt, my life. I wish him dead, for he stands between me and the woman I love. He is reported a gallant gentleman. His blood is as good as my own. Oh! for once, to lay aside the King; and love, and hate, and face my rival like a man. Let him come. Should he make a motion to his sword, mine shall answer it; I have the one here which I carried against Cromwell at Worcester, and ran away from him like all the rest. It may have better luck this time.

Re-enter CHIFFINCH, R. 3 E.

Chif. Your Majesty's toilet is prepared.

King. So, to the Council—Buckingham!!

[*Exit, followed by CHIFFINCH. Door, R. 3 E.*]

Secret door is cautiously opened, R. c., and NELLY peeps in.

Nell. Thank you for this key, Madam Davis. It comes in a lucky time. No one here; that is luckier still. As I expected, everything in confusion; he is a sad sloven. If he have but left these papers littering about, and I can find them, I will destroy those proofs of the Duke's

treason They can't kill me for it besides, I'll swear I never saw them. What is this! "Expenses of the King's ducks." "Last of the ships at Chatham yard." "Project of the Canary Company." "For the Council!" Ha, yes! "Solemn league" This is it! He is saved—or shall be. How to destroy them! Ha! this taper!

Enter KING, hastily, R. 3 E. dressed, attended by CHIFFINCH, who exits, C. D. NELLY, drops papers at table.

King. Who's there! Mistress Gwynne! You look disturbed.

Nell. So do you. What is the matter!

King. Nothing in especial: only a little more treason and ingratitude than usual; and then the kingdom is in great disorder.

Nell. Not so great as this room, I trust. What! are there no women in this house to set matters to rights a little!

King. There are women enow in this house.

Nell. But not the sort of women that set things to rights, eh! Can your Majesty bear to hear the truth!

King. How can I tell! 'Tis an annoyance I have never yet experienced from a woman.

Nell. Ha! ha!

King. Be pleased to give me back my key, mistress.

Nell. What! may I not keep it! May I not come here whenever I please. Will Chiffinch told Mrs. Davis I was to have it for good and all

King. Nay! I will send it you whenever I would have you come. You are too giddy to be trusted with it.

Nell. Well, there is your key, and pray heaven your Majesty may never trust it to a worse woman than Nell Gwynne; but that's past praying for while you have such as Castlemaine about you.

King. Hey-day, Mistress!

Nell. You are; they trade on your bad qualities; they have not the wit to see your good ones; they deceive you and laugh at you, and leave you here in a dirty slovenly room, without even a fire, though 'tis as cold as a Lenten audience.

King. No; they gave me a fire, but it has gone out.

Nell. Then, suppose we light it again?

King. It is somewhat cold! I will order the rogues to light it.

Nell. No, no, let us light it ourselves. Shouldn't you like to learn how to light a fire?

King. [*yawns.*] Yes; I think I *should* like to learn how to light a fire. Can you teach me!

Nell. Nobody better; I have lighted hundreds.

King. With your eyes, Nelly?

Nell. No, Charles, with a farthing rushlight! First we get some wood. Let's see; chop me up this box. What are you looking for? Your sword will do. [*King chops up a cedar box.*] No—Sire; get the bellows. [*takes paper and chips, lights paper, throws chips on it.*] Now, larger wood! good sport, isn't it? Now, you blow, and I'll put on some paper lighted to draw the flames through. [*while King is blowing, she gets treasonable paper, and puts it on fire.*] Blow! Harder! There

now, [*claps her hands.*] that is the 'best fire I ever lighted. Ha, ha!—(for it has saved a man's life)—ha! ha! [*laughs hysterically.*]

King. What a mad merry soul it is; you must often come to see me. Odstish! I know not whether it is the fire or your airy ladyship, but the room seems strangely brighter.

Nell. Then, suppose we sit by the fire, now 'tis lighted.

King. With all my heart. [*They draw their chairs to the fire.*]

Re-enter CHIFFINCH, c. d.

Chif. The Clerk of the Council!

King. Hang the Clerk of the Council!

Chif. He comes after the papers for my Lords, Sire.

King. Ay, these; give them to him.

Nell. (Just in time—thank heaven!)

King. Well!

Chif. Sire, Mistress Stewart craves an immediate audience.

King. Mistress Stewart! admit her instantly. [*to NELL.*] You await the while in that room; I can't part with you yet; you will not listen, hussy.

Nell. [*solemnly*] I have no mean faults, your Majesty. (How fond the men are of making us women tell lies; he knows very well I shall listen.) [*Exit, R. 3 E.*]

Enter Miss STEWART, c. d., ushered in by CHIFFINCH, who exits immediately, c. d.

King. What can I do for your service, fair Cousin?

Stew. Sire, I come to take my leave of your Majesty. To-morrow I retire from the Court.

King. How! without our permission?

Stew. No, Sir; I shall have your permission; I have her Majesty's, and you will hardly oppose our joint desire in so light a matter.

King. Light matter! Frances, would you take from me the one face that it charms me to look on? Would you rob my Court of its star; my heart of its Queen?

Stew. Sire; it is best we part; scandalous tongues have been busy both with your credit and mine; I would not have our common name sullied either in your person or my own. I love your Majesty, as subjects should love their King, with honor and respect; I always would so love you: and that I may, I beseech you let me leave this place. [*about to kneel.*]

King. [*raises her.*] Rise! rise! Leave the Court? No! no! do not decide hastily.

Stew. I have thought and decided; but, before I go, I have here gifts of your Majesty's, which I would return. [*gives casket. King opens it.*]

King. These pearls; my one gift to you.

Stew. I do not need them to keep your Majesty's goodness in remembrance.

King. Pshaw! They were the offerings of my love.

Stew. And therefore they scorch my neck in the wearing. Take them, Sire

King. Think better of all this. Wait here a few minutes. I go to open the Council. That done, I will return, and give you convincing reasons that now is not the time to disrespect your King. [*Exit, c.*]

Stew. What does he mean! His air is strangely grave! There is a cloud about his brow I never saw before.—It fills me with dim terror—I know not why. I will wait and fathom his meaning.

Enter RICHMOND, L.

Rich. My Frances. You here!

Stew. Richmond! My own dear husband! Ah, if yesterday you had found me thus you would have had hard thoughts of me.

Rich. All that is past.

Stew. Oh yes, yes! You guess why I am here.

Rich. Yes, you come to take your leave of this corrupt court, and to announce our marriage.

Stew. Alas! I am a woman still, and still a coward. I was here to bid the King farewell, but I proposed (forgive me, my own love,) to let none know our happiness till we should be far off out of hearing of their scandal—out of reach of their malice.

Rich. Not so; be truer to yourself. Stand by me as I tell the King the truth, and tell him, too, the husband of Frances Stewart must either serve his country and his King in some honorable post or live with you a loving and a quiet life at home.

Stew. Richmond, you are better than I am—you are more fearless, and therefore are you more true. These two years past I have breathed the air of a court, but you have been on the sea. The pure breath of heaven has played upon your face; your heart has still been strung to danger and to glory.—take me from this stifling atmosphere of lies,—oh, take me away! away to the great sea you love—take me anywhere where truth is—raise me to your level, my honest sailor!—I love you—I will be worthy of you. [*She embraces him. The King stands on threshold, c.*] No more equivocation—no more disguise. We are English—we are noble—we are one—we will defy this King together!

King. [*advancing.*] You will need all your courage. [*Richmond uncovers.*]

Stew. Ah!

King. Unhand her, sir—or by heaven——

Stew. You outrage me, sir, in threatening him.

King. S' death, madam! do you bring your lover into my very closet? Would you show yourself without shame as well as gratitude?

Stew. And since when have I forfeited a woman's right to choose whom she will love? Am I the first English maiden who has preferred an honorable suit to one that was all insult, though a king's? This tyranny is not to be borne. Yes, Sire! know that I love the Duke of Richmond, and I claim a freeborn English woman's right to bestow my hand and heart on the man I choose. "Oh! I know that your Majesty's court is no place for honorable love, but I am leaving your court, and leaving it I throw off all the deceit it taught me." This is the man I love, and his I am till death us do part.

King. That may be sooner than you think, disloyal lady.

Stew. Idle threats, your Majesty. I am not a child, nor am I disloyal, as you well know. I am more true to you than you are to yourself.

King. Say you so? I shall answer you better when I find a certain paper.

Nell. [*shows her face at door, R. 3 E. radiant. Aside.*] The paper I burnt—find it if you can.

King. [*rummaging*] 'Twas on this table.

Nell. [*aside.*] Look up the chimney!

King. 'Tis gone!—curse on it—between this and the council. Treason sits on my very footstool; but this time she is foiled. The paper was in duplicate; [*opens drawer.*] here is that duplicate.

Nell. [*aside.*] Lost! lost!

King. Do you know this?

Stew. The papers I gave your Majesty in Spring Gardens I thought not of danger when I took that paper from a plague-spotted hand to give it you. You should not have called me disloyal.

King. Your rebuke is just. You are a somewhat cold-blooded but certainly loyal body, and therefore it is I am about to put a question to you: what does the man deserve, who, being my soldier, yet fights against me;—who, drawing honor from me, yet aims at my throne and life!

Stew. He deserves death.

King. But, say this man was a nobleman?

Stew. Then he deserves to die twice,—once for attacking his king—once for dishonoring his own blood.

King. You say well. Read the names signed to this paper—or read but one—here.

Stew. [*begins to read*] Charles Stewart. [*pauses and gazes first at Richmond then at the King*]

King. Charles Stewart, Duke of Richmond. Oh, you know his signature, you have seen it to his love letters. Duke of Richmond, this lady's hand gave me the proofs of your guilt—this lady's tongue has pronounced your doom,—the scaffold. Ah! you love Cromwell,—to Cromwell you shall go!

Stew. No, no! This is delusion. Richmond—speak, belie this writing—say you have not been so mad.

Rich. I was mad.

Stew. Ah! I drove him to treason—betrayed him to his ruin. I have murdered the man I love.

Rich. Hush, Frances! you have but done your duty—my unworthy doubts, they ruined me!

Stew. Mercy, sire! mercy!

King. Mercy for him!

Stew. No, not for him, but for me. Oh! spare my life—it is bound up in his.

King. You were warned.

Stew. I was. Oh! I have been much to blame—forgive me. He loved you so—he was so faithful—so zealous a subject until we drove him to despair.

King. These are idle words—here is his handwriting.

Stew. No! here is his true handwriting. See, sir,—his letter written from sea, scarce four weeks since,—read it, sir. I implore you,—my hand shakes so I cannot,—pray read, it may soften your heart towards us.

King. [*reads coldly.*] “Sweetheart, I write, with the Dutchmen a short mile on our lee—how I may fare in this battle rests with heaven. My breath is my king’s, as my heart is thine. If I die, tell the King he had no truer servant. What I have been to thee thou knowest. For my life, I would I had ten thousand instead of one—”

Stew. Oh, no! ’tis not so cold. You read his words but not his heart. “For my life, would I had ten thousand instead of one, to give them all to his Majesty—my last thought is for him and thee—and my last words shall be loving and loyal” And this man loved not the King? But he loved *me*,—and he is not like you—his love is not given to many. Oh! think what it must be to live but for one—and to see that one snatched from us in sport. (“He was the poor man that had but one lamb, the sole joy of his heart; you were the rich man that had many flocks and herds; yet who must rob him of his only treasure.”) Such wrongs have driven men mad in every age. Oh! what ice is at my heart—what lead is on my lips. I cannot say one word that sounds like love—but I can die for you, my lord. Well, raise the axe, Sir! he has offended you—let him die—but the hour he dies I shall die too!

King. Perdition! You forget to whom you plead for your lover.

Stew. Lover! He is my husband!

King. Your husband! Now, by heaven—

Stew. We were married yesterday.

King. Married!

Stew. It was I who proposed this, not he. I could not bear his doubts, his misery, his madness. Have pity on me! It is too horrible to make a husband fall by his wife’s hand. Your whole reign, your whole life, cry out against such monstrous cruelty. You never loved me, or you could not kill me. No! I see mercy in his eye. Oh! do not fight against your own generous nature. You have humbled us—do not destroy us. By the name of Stewart which we all three bear—by the bitter sorrows our race suffered together—by your father’s head the royal martyr, who in the act of death forgave his murderers—by your own hope of mercy from the Eternal King—I implore you, on my knees, have mercy upon poor Frances Stewart. No! I will not let you go till you grant my life. Charles! my dear cousin! have pity on me—pity! pity! [*Faints.*]

Rich. Frances! My love! My wife! My crime will be her death
[*Falls on his knees and supports her head.*]

King. Poor souls! Stay, sir! we are rough nurses—there’s a woman here. [*Goes hastily to door, R. 3 E., and beckons NELL GWYNNE, who comes hastily in and helps RICHMOND take MISS STEWART to chair—gives her flacon to smell—KING meditates.*] How they love one another! If I take his life she will hate me. [*sadly.*] And I am a King, and must not hope to have anything I really long for. Then since I cannot be

anything more agreeable I will be a king. [*puts on his hat—they all look at him with anxiety.*] Ho, Chiffinch!

Re-enter CHIFFINCH, c.

Is the court assembled?

Chif. Yes, Sire!

King. Open the doors.

[*Exit CHIFFINCH, c.*]

Nell. (l.) [*trembling.*] Courage, dear lady—the King relents.

King. (c.) Cousin Frances! do not tremble—do not weep. I told you I loved you as I have loved no other woman—I will prove it. Cousin of Richmond, you are the husband of Frances Stewart. I am not so rich as my brother of France. I can give you, for my wedding present, but this poor slip of paper. [*gives him the treasonable paper.*]

Rich. (R. c.) Oh, Sire! you have conquered me as the axe never conquered a gentleman.

Stew. (R. c.) He has conquered himself—he is greater than a king.

[*RICHMOND and STEWART kiss the KING's hands. The doors are opened, c. The QUEEN and court appear.*]

King. There has been a marriage at court—nobody was in the secret but myself. [*QUEEN advances into closet.*] Suffer me to present the Duke and Duchess of Richmond to your Majesty. [*DUKE, DUCHESS, and QUEEN exchange obeisances*] and to the court [*DUKE, DUCHESS, and court exchange obeisances.*]

King. [*looking at NELL, who laughs.*] Well, Nelly, have we done our duty.

Nell. Indeed you have, your Majesty! [*crosses to KING.*] You have made two loving hearts happy, and I am happy! [*stily.*] And when your Majesty pleases, I'll help you to light another fire—

King. [*confused and stopping her.*] No, no! And since our happiness is complete [*taking the QUEEN's hand.*] I invite your Majesty and the court to accompany me to the playhouse, and if Mistress Nelly has taught us a lesson here, she will likewise amuse us there.

Nell. It is our desire, your Majesty, while we amuse to improve the mind—our aim is—

By nature's study, to portray most clear,

From Beaumont, Fletcher, Johnson—immortal Shakespeare—

How Kings and Princes, by our mimic art,

Yield their sway. and applaud the actor's part.

The Bard of Avon, in that prolific age,

Traced thoughts upon the enduring page;

Precepts in that powerful work we find,

To improve the morals and instruct the mind;

There he holds, as 'twere. "a mirror up to nature,

"Shows scorn her own image, virtue her own feature."

To-night, King, Queen, Lords and Ladies act their part,

Each prompted by the workings of the heart;

And Nelly hopes they will not lose their cause—

Nor will they—if favored by your applause.

LADIES. QUEEN. KING. NELLY. STEWART. RICHMOND.
O O O O O O

CURTAIN FALLS.



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